

The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter
February 2025



Dates for your Diary

Sun 2 Feb	11am	Holy Communion	St Paul's Church
Fri 7 Feb	8pm	Ladies of Culham-Poetry with Jo	St Paul's Church
Wed 12 Feb	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Culham Pre-school/Nursery
Mon 17 Feb	7.30pm	RSPB VWH Group – The Wildlife & Sights of Shetland by David Tolliday (Zoom meeting)	For details see RSPB VWH website
Tues 18 Feb	7.30pm	Sutton Courtenay Womens Institute-Talk on Henna painting	River Room Sutton Courtenay
Thurs 20 Jan		RSPB VWH Group – Camouflage without spots by Ian Alexander (Zoom meeting)	For details see RSPB VWH website
Sun 23 Feb		RSPB VWH Group-Port Meadow, Oxford	For details see RSPB VWH website

Talking point by Rev'd Emma Firth

According to the meteorological calendar, February is the last month of Winter in the UK. But if you prefer to use the astronomical calendar, centred around equinoxes and solstices, then Spring begins around 20th March. Regardless of which date you prefer, I can remember at least two years in the last twenty when we had snow in Oxfordshire in April!

If you wanted to keep your Christmas cheer going through the wintery month of January, you could revert to the older Christian tradition of keeping your festive decorations up until the beginning of February. Contemporary traditions compel us to end the Christmas season on 5th January ("twelfth night") which is the Eve of the Festival of Epiphany, when Christians celebrate the arrival of the Magi (wise men) to see the baby Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In the Christian calendar, the season of Christmas-Epiphany actually ends on 2nd February with Candlemas, which is also known as the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, based on an ancient Jewish custom for women, following childbirth.

This 17th-century poem is a reminder of the superstition of goblins coming your way - not on the twelfth night - but on the Eve of Candlemas:

Ceremony Upon Candlemas Eve, Robert Herrick (1591-1674)*

*Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and misletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye dress'd the Christmas hall;
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind;
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,
So many goblins you shall see.*

In our busy modern lives, I wonder if families with school-age children prefer to take all the decorations down early to bring some semblance of order and tidiness before the new school term starts! In medieval times, Candlemas was a great feast, and the name derives from the tradition of bringing candles for use in the coming year to church to be blessed, alongside candlelit processions in honour of the feast. Christians use candles all year round to symbolise Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. There are some wonderful customs associated with Candlemas from flipping crêpes in France whilst holding a gold coin to dressing as bears and eating honey in Hungary. Many customs around the globe include food and activities for children. Candlemas bell flowers (Snowdrops) have been appearing in sheltered areas since the beginning of January.

In Hungary, folklore says that if the bears come out of hibernation on 2nd February and it is sunny, they are frightened by their shadows and go back to their dens to sleep longer, but if there is no light from the sun, they stay out because winter will soon end. This resembles the paradoxical weather prediction from Catalonia that bad weather at Candlemas signals imminent good weather and vice versa. This tradition was taken to some regions of the US and Canada and adapted to 'Groundhog Day'. You may know the multi-award-winning and still popular film of the same name, released in 1993. The main character Phil is a cynical weatherman sent to cover the Groundhog Day celebrations in a US town and becomes stuck in a time loop. Initially, Phil uses the repeats to manipulate events for his self-indulgence and own satisfaction but gradually changes to learning new skills. After unspecified, but innumerable repeats of waking up on 2nd February, he learns how to use the time to benefit others. The monotonous time loop is finally broken when instead of manipulating Rita to win her over, he wins her over through selfless acts and genuine care for others. The film was created as a feel-good comedy, but part of its ongoing appeal is the philosophical messages within the storyline. Phil is transformed from a cynical, grumpy, self-engrossed egotist who finally begins to use the time to improve himself, learn new skills

and help others, thus giving his life meaning and purpose. In the end, it is Phil's authentic love for Rita that saves him from the time loop.

The story of Christmas is a story of love – the unconditional love of God for his people – every one of us. As the long season of Christmas-Epiphany ends on 2nd February, the Christian calendar begins to point towards the seasons of Lent and Easter, which continue the story of God's selfless love through Jesus Christ.

Revd Emma Firth

**<https://allpoetry.com/poem/14327903-Ceremony-Upon-Candlemas-Eve-by-Robert-Herrick>*

Events in the Abbey

Saturday 1st February 7:00 pm Thames Consort – Abbey Fundraiser

Chart Thames Consort concert in Dorchester Abbey. The programme includes vocal and instrumental music from Italy by Monteverdi, Vivaldi, Corelli, Leonarda & Lassus. With Sharon Warnes and Claire Parkin (Violins), Judith Dallosso ('Cello), and Jeremy Boughton (Director and continuo). Ticket details to appear on the Dorchester Abbey website. Tickets also available on the door.

Saturday 8th February 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Orchestra of St John's: Music for Autism

Concert of classical and jazz music by autistic performers – 6pm at Dorchester Abbey

An inclusive evening of inspirational music-making. Following its success last year, OSJ Music for Autism presents another inclusive concert, featuring amazing pianists Michael Powell, Derek Paravicini, Ashleigh Turley and other young musicians across the spectrum of neurodiversity With Poppy McGhee.

£15.00 – £20.00 Website: www.osj.org.uk

Saturday 15th February 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Orchestra of St John's: Mendelssohn

A Classic-FM line-up of three masterpieces by Mendelssohn. Starring in the violin concerto is Braimah Kanneh-Mason, the second oldest of the Kanneh-Masons, the prodigious clan from Nottingham. Plus, the Hebrides Overture and Italian Symphony. Tickets from £15.00. Website: www.osj.org.uk

Monday 24th February Dorchester Abbey Moving Music

Two day-time concerts. The next instalment of this inclusive concert series. All welcome in particular those suffering from Dementia, their families and carers. Please check Dorchester Abbey Events webpages for further information. <https://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/whats-on/>

Village News

Village website: www.culhamvillage.org.uk

Culham Village Community WhatsApp Group

Please scan the QR code below to join now!



To engage with your local community, please join the '**Culham Village Community**' WhatsApp group. To scan the QR code above simply open up your 'photo' app and hover it over the QR code and join the relevant group that interests you.

Culham Village Defibrillator



The Culham Village Defibrillator is located at the Culham Village Nursery & Preschool on an external wall facing onto the Glebe.

Culham Parish Council (CPC) January 15th 2025

Summary of Meeting

The meeting was attended by six councillors', the Parish Clerk, Robin Bennet, plus four members of the public. The meeting opened at 7:30PM and included the District Councillor's report, the County Councillor's report, public participation, the Clerk's report, discussions regarding village maintenance and improvements, plus agreement on the 2025 budget.

Summary of SODC Councillor's report:

Affordable Housing Projects: Thame and Wheatley welcomed 48 energy-efficient, affordable homes with eco-features like solar panels and EV chargers. A third project for 31 homes will begin in 2025.

Support for Residents: Council extended Council Tax relief backdating to 12 months, prevented 21 households from homelessness in November, and awarded 13 Disabled Facilities Grants.

Cultural Initiatives: A new Performing Arts Grant of up to £5,000 will support inclusive arts projects; applications open on February 5th.

Thermal Imaging Camera: Free thermal cameras are available for local groups to identify heat loss in buildings this winter—contact the Climate Action team to borrow one.

Summary of County Councillor's Report:

Local Government Reforms: Major restructuring of councils is underway, potentially replacing District and County Councils with larger Unitary Authorities. Concerns over local accountability and the impact on rural areas are being raised.

Transport Developments: The Didcot Garden Town HIF1 Scheme has been approved, with construction of new roads, bridges, and cycle routes set to start in 2026.

Community Support: Recent grants funded village improvements, summer activities, and local amenities.

Citizens' Assembly: A public group will shape future transport plans to support Oxfordshire's growth and sustainability by 2050.

Public Participation:

Four members of the public attended the meeting, raising points about village planning permission, questioning the state of the Burycroft path, requesting updates relating to village ground maintenance, and asking about the status of a public building in Culham. All were discussed during the rest of the meeting, including a suggestion to update village notice boards.

General meeting:

Burycroft and Tollgate Road - Path widths:

The Parish Council (PC) reviewed quotes and agreed to "side-out" the Burycroft and Tollgate Road, aiming to restore the paths to their full width. In future years, the PC will organise community volunteering sessions, to help manage future soil-ingress on the paths.

Community Building:

With the status of Church reordering appearing to have stalled, the PC has set aside funds in 2025 to review alternative opportunities for a public building in Culham.

Speed Indicators:

The PC discussed a potential speed limit change in Thame Lane (the NSL/60mph section beyond the school down to 40mph) and also the installation of a number of speed indicators, following the recent 20mph changes. 2025 funds have been allocated to install two speed indicators in the village, with multiple posts ensuring different areas can be covered.

Budget:

The PC discussed and approved the 2025 budget, including allocations for bus shelters, community orchard infrastructure, the speed indicators, plus general village improvements.

The PC also approved the adoption of Oxfordshire Council's Charter.

The meeting ended at 9:25PM.

The next meeting of the PC is February 12th at 7:30PM.

Further details and links to documents referenced in these notes can be found on the Culham Parish Council website. <https://culham-pc.gov.uk/>

Hetty Owen's Half Marathan

I ran the Oxford Half Marathon in October, and I wanted to say THANK YOU to everyone who donated to Against Breast Cancer! We reached a fundraising total of over £700 which the charity and I are very grateful for. My official time was 2:01:12.

I've volunteered at the charity for a few months and have seen how hard they work! If you would like to learn more about the charity you can visit againstbreastcancer.org.uk

Thank you again - Hetty



Overgrown Hedges, Shrubs and Trees Bordering Roads and Paths

Villagers are reminded that where they have hedges, shrubs and trees bordering roads and paths it is their responsibility to ensure that they are cut back to the boundary line so as not to overhang or encroach onto the highway (meaning carriageway, footway or verge). There should be clearance of at least 2.2m (7' 2") above a footway, pavement, or verge to allow pedestrians free passage.

The Mouthpiece Team

We always welcome new volunteers to join the team whether you enjoy editing, marketing or distribution – please contact

Anne or Gordon directly if you are interested in joining us



Ladies of Culham Next Dates:

7th February – poetry with Jo

7th March – community choir with Anne

4th April – fairy garden creations with Laura

2nd May – abstract art with April

6th June – tour of Oxford with Ruth

4th July – perfume making with Gaynor

1st August – social walk

5th September – TBC (Ideas welcome!)

Thank you so much to everyone who's run
sessions in 2024.

We look forward to lots of workshops, shared
experiences and socializing in 2025.

To be added onto the LOC WhatsApp group, or
any questions, please email us

Email ladiesofculham@gmail.com

SODC District Councillor's Report January 2025

Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye

New Homes for those who need them

The first of three new projects to provide 48 new, genuinely affordable and energy efficient homes in Thame and Wheatley to meet local needs is now finished and has welcomed new tenants. The homes are a combination of new builds and conversions and will include one-bed houses and flats at affordable rent or under a shared ownership scheme, as well as independent living accommodation for over 55 and 60-year-olds. Brought to life through South Oxfordshire District Council's partnership work with Soha Housing, Thame Community Land Trust and Thame & District Housing Association, the homes are largely funded by Section 106 affordable housing grants from developer contributions.

In Thame, the first residents have moved into their new homes and are enjoying energy saving solar roof panels and ground source heat pumps which will help keep energy bills low, as well as access to EV charging points. See what one resident, Tina, says about her home [in this video on YouTube](#).

A newly built property in Wheatley of 12 one-bed apartments is also welcoming new tenants. The eco features mean the building will achieve zero carbon emissions when in use. In addition, work is due to start on a third project of 31 affordable rent or shared ownership new-build houses and flats in Thame in 2025. The mix of new, affordable homes was established through a housing needs survey specific to Thame and will be available for people with a local connection to Thame.

Housing and homelessness

On 12 November 2024, South and Vale completed its annual rough sleeper count which is an estimate based upon the number of persons known to be rough sleeping on the night. Nine individuals were recorded as rough sleeping at the end of November (S4/V5), a decrease of one on the previous month. When the count took place in November 2023 there were three persons rough sleeping in South Oxfordshire.

The number of housing register applicants in housing need at the end of November was 1,495 in South. The housing team work with people at risk of homelessness, and just in November alone 21 households were prevented from becoming homeless. The Council also assesses applications for grants for Disabled Facilities each month, and in November 2024, 13 households were awarded grants in the District. This helps people remain living in their own homes.

Council Tax relief change

We have extended the period of time that a new claim for council tax relief can be back dated from 6 to 12 months where good cause has been demonstrated. This is part of our commitment to assist residents wherever needed in a cost of living crisis.

Joint Local Plan

The draft development plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 9th December. This is within our revised timetable. We will hear more about the timetable for the inquiry and the matter and issues to be discussed there in due course.

Local Government Reform coming

Just before Christmas, the Labour Government published its proposals for reforming the structure and financing of local government, with a White Paper entitled "English Devolution". There are lots of

reasons to welcome reform of local government; our current District/County structure can be confusing and any changes which improve local decision-making and accountability can only be a good thing. However, we have major concerns that the proposed changes could make local authorities **less** accountable to their residents and could take decision-making further away from the communities they serve. District councils are not being consulted either.

Although the White Paper is called “English Devolution” there are no proposals to devolve powers or funding to regions in the same way that they have been devolved to the Welsh or Scottish Governments; much of the detail is still to be determined, but the Government is hoping to press ahead with the first tranche of reorganisations quickly. A decision on whether to postpone the county elections due in May will be taken by the County Council on Thursday.

Thermal imaging camera

A reminder that a thermal camera is available for town and parish councils and community groups to use to identify heat loss in buildings. The infrared thermal imaging equipment can show clearly ‘cold spots’ where insulation could improve energy efficiency and thereby reduce energy waste and costs. It can easily locate areas of significant heat loss without invasive techniques affecting the fabric of the building. With the colder weather now the camera could be used for multiple properties in the village.

If the Parish Council or other organisation would like to borrow the equipment (free of charge) please contact the [Climate Action team](#). The camera is only effective during cold weather when the heating is on and is available on a first come, first served basis.

Christmas tree collections

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/christmaswaste/christmas-tree-collections/>

This lists various drop off points for unwanted Christmas trees. Some parishes are listed as well as garden centres etc.

Performing Arts Grant now established

At the end of 2024, a new Performing Arts Grant Scheme was approved by the SODC Cabinet, which will enable community and voluntary organisations to apply for up to £5,000 to support projects that enhance the cultural landscape and improve the quality of life for local residents and communities. The scheme will open for applications on 5th February; applicants must show how their projects meet the community values and priorities of fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable performing arts scene in South Oxfordshire. More details can be found at www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants.

Changes to custom and self-build register

At SODC we keep a register to find out what the demand is for self-build or custom-build plots in the area. We use the information to support negotiation with developers for self-build provision on larger housing sites and to guide future policy making. We’ve recently made some changes to our custom and self-build register following criteria set by the Government.

As well as basic age and residency, there are now two categories:

- Part 1 – People or groups of individuals who meet the local connection test.
- Part 2 – Individuals or associations who meet the basic eligibility criteria but do not meet the local connection test.

There is also a nominal £5 annual fee to join the register. This applies to people applying for part 1 or part 2. You can find more information on our Custom and Self Build Register [page](#)

Leader's summary of 2024

If you would like a brief review of what South Oxfordshire District Council was doing during 2024 then see the Leader's summary at <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/a-statement-from-cllr-david-rouane-leader-of-south-oxfordshire-district-council-3/>

If you have any questions or issues you would like to contact me about:

Sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk

Or leave a message for me on 01235 635566

Other News



'Figurative and Abstract Reflections'

**4th - 15th of February:
Monday - Saturday 9:30 am - 3:45 pm**

At the Vale and Downland Museum Wantage

Meet the artists Fridays 7th and 14th



19 Church St, Wantage OX12 8BL

RSPB Vale of White Horse Local Group



The RSPB Local Group (Vale of White Horse) is holding monthly talks (details below) over Zoom for winter, and returning to the River Room, by the church, Sutton Courtenay for the March meeting. We also do monthly wildlife walks.

Our next session is on 20th Jan: Camouflage without Spots (Ian Alexander, Zoom only).

We have also opened up our photo competition, rules and an entry form are on the local group website www.rspb-vwh.org.uk Entries should be emailed to Mike Haddrell (mikehaddrell@gmail.com) by 17 March. The images will be judged by Ben Andrew at the River Room meeting on 28 April, which is one of the upcoming events:

- * Walk 26th Jan: Radley Lakes
- * Talk 17th Feb: The Wildlife and Sights of Shetland, David Tolliday (Zoom only)
- * Walk 23rd Feb: Port Meadow
- * Talk 17th Mar: The Ridgeway (John Tyler, River Room & Zoom)
- * Walk 30th Mar: Farmoor
- * Walk 27th Apr: Greenham Common
- * Talk 28th Apr: Photographing Birds, Ben Andrew (River Room only)
- * 12th May: AGM and Members' Evening (River Room only)
- * Walk 25th May: Otmoor
- * Walk 22nd June: Greenham Common (evening, nightjars etc)

With not much of the 24/25 season left to go, we have now reduced new membership to £10 for adults (whether or not you are an RSPB member), and free for under-16s. This covers our programme of monthly talks and wildlife walks, and a quarterly e-Newsletter. If you prefer to attend an individual talk, you can do this as a non-member for £5 per talk. You can join using the form on our website (under "Contacts"): www.rspb-vwh.org.uk, or at a meeting (cash, cheque or bank transfer). For meetings with an option to join via Zoom, members receive the link via email a few days beforehand



SUTTON COURTENAY WI



We always welcome new members
We meet every third Tuesday monthly in the
River Room, All Saints Church, at 7.30 pm
Come along for visit

Tuesday 18th February 2025

The talk will be about henna painting

Contact us via email at suttoncourtenaywi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk
Or 01869 331081



An essential new reservoir for the South East

What's happening in your area

We're conducting site surveys and ground investigations in the local area, including near Steventon, East Hanney, Drayton, and Sutton Courtenay. You may see our surveyors conducting various investigations, such as winter bird surveys and traffic surveys.

We're also carrying out a clay compaction trial on land off Hanney Road, near East Hanney, to support our reservoir design plans. We have begun excavating the clay to build temporary embankments up to three metres high to test the clay. We're aiming to finish by February 2025, weather permitting.

For more information on what's happening in your area, please visit:
www.thames-sro.co.uk/sesro



Cutting rural crime

Rural crime - specifically defined as things like the theft of farm machinery, equipment, damage to crops and offences such as hair coursing - can have a huge impact on farming businesses, not to mention the real issues of safety for individuals. Thankfully rural crime is falling locally. Across Thames Valley it is down 24% over the last 12 months and in southern Oxfordshire it's down 33% but that's not by accident.

Last year I secured additional funding from the Home Office for work focussed specifically in Oxfordshire. Thames Valley Police have teamed up with local District Councils, forming a Rural Crime Partnership and delivering the following:

- Using undercover cameras and off-road bikes, officers can now better monitor remote areas and track down offenders who think they can't be reached.
- Farmers have received free security reviews and DNA marking kits for their equipment, making it much harder for thieves to get away and easier to return stolen items if something happens.
- Rural Crime Advisor: A dedicated advisor was recruited, to be out in the community, offering helpful advice, meeting with local farmers and businesses, and keeping rural industries safer.
- Tackling Fly-Tipping: New surveillance tools are helping councils catch and prosecute those who dump waste, keeping rural areas cleaner and more beautiful.

More officers have been recruited to the Rural Crime Taskforce, making it one of the largest and certainly one of the most effective in the country. They recognise that many of these offences are part of organised crime. The taskforce are identifying and focussing on the most dangerous and prolific offenders. In fact they have been so successful that whilst there have been reduction in crime here, other police areas have seen increases as criminals target other places. None of us are safe, unless we're all safe; so we've now established a South East Partnership Against Rural Crime - joining together neighbouring police forces so that we can target criminals all the way from the farms they target to the ports where they try to export stolen goods.

With these measures, our rural areas are becoming safer places thanks to the hard work and dedication of Thames Valley Police officers.



Matthew Barber
Your voice in
Thames Valley

Matthew Barber is Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, working with the police to help drive down crime locally.

STAY IN TOUCH
matthewbarber.co.uk
@matthewbarberpcc
@matthew_barber

JOIN THE WHATSAPP COMMUNITY

Promoted by Matthew Barber on his own behalf, of Waterloo House, 58-60 High Street, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 6HJ.



January News – Hedgerow Highways



Hedges are a vital part of our local nature, providing shelter and resources for many species of mammals, insects, and birds (from hibernating hedgehogs to the smallest of beetles). They're crucial wildlife corridors that allow safe travel between isolated habitats.

The benefits that hedgerows provide for biodiversity are endless. In a heavily fragmented landscape, hedgerows link up valuable habitats for wildlife such as woodland, grassland and ponds. This connects populations that would otherwise be isolated and vulnerable and allows relocation to better habitat. Over 100 priority species utilise hedgerows for a variety of reasons such as for shelter, food, or navigation. Birds and

small mammals nest in hedges, bats use hedgerows as foraging grounds and navigational markers, and reptiles hide in the long tussocky margins associated with hedgerows.

November through to March is the best time of year to plant new hedges. The first step is to acquire your roots. In Oxfordshire we recommend planting Blackthorn, Spindle, Buckthorn, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn, Wild Privet, Cherry Plum, or Hazel. Plant 4 or 5 plants per metre, about 25cm apart using the slit planting method, ensuring all fibrous roots are completely buried in the soil. To see a detailed tutorial of this planting method, head to our website where you can watch a demonstration from expert Nigel Adams.

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/hedgerows-guidance>

Aftercare for hedgerows is crucial. Keep weeds and grass away from the hedge plants for the first 2-3 years to give them plenty of space to absorb moisture and light. Thoroughly water the plants during dry spells. Compost can be very helpful to maintain vigour due to the competition for nutrients between such closely situated plants. Try to trim your hedge annually in the first three to five years to encourage bushy growth. Once your hedgerow is fully established (approximately 5 years) you can trim every year or every two or three years but make sure you don't trim your hedge to the same place every cut. More detailed aftercare information is also available on our website. Good luck with your new hedges!

New Year – New Nature!

Why not make some **green themed resolutions** this new year! Perhaps yours is to cultivate new hedge life. Maybe you're going to reduce your meat intake, find eco-friendly cleaning products, or make your garden more wildlife friendly using native plants. There are endless ways to make a difference!

Why not sign up to our monthly email Bulletin, visit our website, and follow us on social media for the latest nature news and ways you can join others in helping nature in Oxfordshire

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/news>

Jess Bouwer – Wild Oxfordshire Hedgerows & Partnerships Officer

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/>



There has recently been a spate of thefts from sheds and outbuildings. Items stolen include a leaf blower and motorbike.

Below are some helpful tips on how to keep your property secure.

Think like a thief

Take a look at your shed and consider how you would break in. It's worth having a good padlock on the door with no exposed screws. Pay attention to hinges, as these are sometimes easily removable. If you have windows, then these could be vulnerable unless they're secured with wire mesh or grills. And keep it locked at all times.

Alarm it

Consider a battery-operated shed alarm. They look low key, but they respond to movement or door contact with an extremely loud siren.

Lock it, hide it or mark it

Don't give them the opportunity or the tools to commit a crime. Lock everything away securely. Tools can be locked inside a locker or box or secured with a chain.

Secure your bike to the ground or a lockable stand within a locked shed or garage. Visit [Sold Secure](#) to search for ground anchors and other locks designed to fix to floors and walls.

It's always worth draping an old sheet or blanket over the top of mowers or bikes to keep them covered from view.

Although it might sound like stating the obvious, never leave your garage or shed door unlocked if you're not around. Keep the door closed between uses so that no one can see what's inside.

Property mark your items and take photographs of them. Some tools can be painted with your name or postcode and forensic marking is also an option. You can also register any item that has a serial number with [Immobilise](#).

A locksmith belonging to the [Master Locksmiths Association](#) can advise you on the most secure shed and garage door security. They can also help you install it. Most also provide full home security surveys.

The top five most common items stolen from sheds

- Bikes
- Mowers
- Sports equipment
- Power tools
- Garden tools

If you think you have any information relating to any offences, then please do not hesitate to get in touch and if you witness a crime taking place call 999.



Soldiers of
Oxfordshire
Museum



**New E. H. Shepard exhibition to open at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum,
including original Winnie-the-Pooh illustrations**

Ref No. EHS/G/17/28

Pencil self-portrait of E.H. Shepard seated in his WWI officer's uniform.

© The Shepard Trust, c. 1915-1919, from the E.H. Shepard Archive, University of Surrey.

From 18 January to 31 August 2025, Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock will host a brand-new exhibition of artwork by E. H. Shepard, best known as the original illustrator for A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* and the 1931 edition of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*.

The collection of Shepard's work, including some of his beloved children's illustrations alongside a wealth of his Great War sketches and comic art, come to the museum on loan from the University of Surrey Archives and The Shepard Trust - on show for the first time in Oxfordshire.

By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Ernest H. Shepard had already become a regular contributor to the popular *Punch* magazine, often drawing cartoons about the war for them among other publications. By 1915 Shepard had enlisted, going on to serve as an officer in the Royal Garrison Artillery, first in France's Western Front, and later Italy. From the start of his officer training in 1915, he began to document the war as he saw it, in pencil sketches, pen and ink drawings, and even watercolours. These ranged from humorous caricatures to detailed studies, capturing life in the trenches with his own unique style.

Alongside examples of his art, the exhibition will include some of Shepard's kit from his war service, such as his Royal Garrison Artillery officer's forage cap and identification tags.

Post-war, it was through his regular work for *Punch* that he would be commissioned to illustrate poems by A. A. Milne first published in the magazine, then for the collection *When We Were Very Young*. These were the first appearances of the bear that would become Winnie-the-Pooh. Shepard would develop a close working relationship with Milne, and illustrate *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *When We Were Six* and *The House at Pooh Corner*. The series was so popular that they would never fall out of print, and today can be found translated into over 50 languages.

Alongside Shepard's war work and famous children's illustrations, his drawings beyond the bear will also feature in the exhibition. He continued his regular work for Punch magazine into the 1950s, as their leading weekly political cartoonist for twenty years, and produced cartoons covering the rise of Hitler and the Nazis in Germany, appeasement, the Second World War itself, through to the Labour government that followed and the radical changes they brought with them.

E. H. Shepard's later work featured in the exhibition will include original sketches for children's books *Betsy and Joe* (1966), which he wrote as well as illustrated, and the Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*

In later life, E. H. Shepard donated the collections of his work he still possessed to a number of museums and archives, including the Victoria & Albert Museum, the National Army Museum, and to Guildford's University of Surrey, the home of the collection going on display at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum.

Supporting the exhibition itself, the museum will be running a full programme of family events and activities, including a new Winnie-the-Pooh themed visitor trail 'Up in the Air' challenging younger visitors to find items lost around the museum by residents of Hundred Acre Wood. The museum's Under 5s play area has been given a Winnie-the-Pooh-style makeover, so kids get the chance to sit and play with the beloved bear and his friends.

Other family activities, including regular tea parties and craft workshops, such as kite and puppet making, will take place throughout the Half Term, Easter and Summer Holidays. Full dates and details will be made available on the museum's website.

For grown-up visitors, author of *Shepard's War* and the upcoming *Art of Winnie-the-Pooh*, Chairman of The Shepard Trust James Campbell will give a series of talk on the life of E. H. Shepard and his art. Dates for these talks will be also announced in the near future.

The museum looks forward to welcoming visitors to the new exhibition from 18th January to 31st August 2025.

The Mouthpiece

Please note that any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors. We accept contributions and advertisements in good faith and cannot be responsible for errors therein.

Please send contributions for the March 2025 issue of The Mouthpiece by **February 15th** to:
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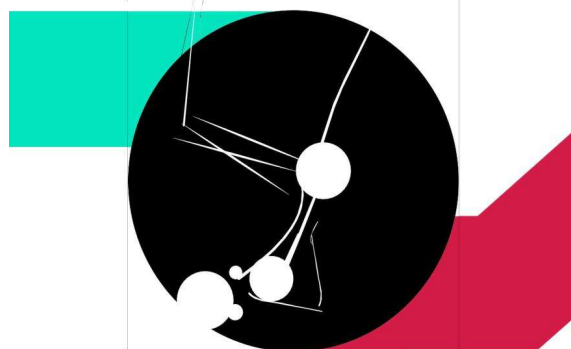
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