

# VE DAY 80

THE OAKS SOUVENIR EDITION • SUMMER 2025

In the long years to come not only will the people of this island but of the world, wherever the bird of freedom chirps in human hearts, look back to what we've done and they will say 'do not despair, do not yield to violence and tyranny...'

-Winston Churchill, May 8, 1945



# 1945



# 2025





# King George VI's VE Day speech

Today we give thanks to Almighty God for a great deliverance. Speaking from our Empire's oldest capital city, war-battered but never for one moment daunted or dismayed – speaking from London, I ask you to join with me in that act of thanksgiving. Germany, the enemy who drove all Europe into war, has been finally overcome. In the Far East we have yet to deal with the Japanese, a determined and cruel foe. To this we shall turn with the utmost resolve and with all our resources. But at this hour, when the dreadful shadow of war has passed from our hearths and homes in these islands, we may at last make one pause for thanksgiving and then turn our thoughts to the tasks all over the world which peace in Europe brings with it.

Let us remember those who will not come back, their constancy and courage in battle, their sacrifice and endurance in the face of a merciless enemy: let us remember the men in all the Services and the women in all the Services who have laid down their lives. We have come to the end of our tribulation, and they are not with us at the moment of our rejoicing. Then let us salute in proud gratitude the great host of the living who have brought us to victory. I cannot praise them to the measure of each one's service, for in a total war the efforts of all rise to the same noble height and all are devoted to the common purpose. Armed or unarmed, men and women, you have fought, striven, and endured to your utmost. No one knows that better than I do; and as your King I thank with a full heart those who bore arms so valiantly on land and sea, or in the air; and all civilians who, shouldering their many burdens, have carried them unflinchingly without complaint.

With those memories in our minds, let us think what it was that has upheld us through nearly six years of suffering and peril. The knowledge that everything was at stake: our freedom, our independence, our very existence as a people; but the knowledge also that in defending ourselves we were defending the liberties of the whole world; that our cause was the cause not of this nation only, not of this Empire and Commonwealth only, but of every land where freedom is cherished and law and liberty go hand in hand. In the darkest hours we knew that the enslaved and isolated peoples of Europe

looked to us; their hopes were our hopes; their confidence confirmed our faith. We knew that, if we failed, the last remaining barrier against a world-wide tyranny would have fallen in ruins. But we did not fail. We kept our faith with ourselves and with one another; we kept faith and unity with our great allies. That faith and unity have carried us to victory through dangers which are times seemed overwhelming.

So let us resolve to bring to the tasks which lie ahead the same high confidence in our mission. Much hard work awaits us, both in the restoration of our own country after the ravages of war and in helping to restore peace and sanity to a shattered world. This comes upon us at a time when we have all given of our best.

For five long years and more, heart and brain, nerve and muscle have been directed upon the overthrow of Nazi tyranny. Now we turn, fortified by success, to deal with our last remaining foe. The Queen and I know the ordeals which you have endured throughout the Commonwealth and Empire. We are proud to have shared some of these ordeals with you, and we know also that together we shall all face the future with stern resolve and prove that our reserves of will-power and vitality are inexhaustible.

There is great comfort in the thought that the years of darkness and danger in which the children of our country have grown up are over and, please God, for ever. We shall have failed, and the blood of our dearest will have flowed in vain, if the victory which they died to win does not lead to a lasting peace, founded on justice and established in good will.

To that, then, let us turn our thoughts on this day of just triumph and proud sorrow; and then take up our work again, resolved as a people to do nothing unworthy of those who died for us and to make the world such a world as they would have desired, for their children and for ours. This is task to which now honour binds us. In the hour of danger we humbly committed our cause into the Hand of God, and He has been our Strength and Shield. Let us thank Him for His mercies, and in this hour of Victory commit ourselves and our new task to the guidance of that same strong Hand.

## REMEMBERING...

... the men of Bucklebury who fell in World War Two

Eric T Andrews  
Royal Berkshire Regiment

Jack Bidmead  
Royal Fusiliers

Leonard WN Gunter  
Somerset Light Infantry

Charles EW Hull MC  
Queens Royal Regiment

Gerald M Kennedy  
Royal Air Force

John AW Lawrence  
Royal Air Force

Reginald J Mallard  
Royal Berkshire Regiment

Robert P Neate  
Border Regiment

Hector RA Newman  
Royal Air Force

William J Savory  
Black Watch

Frederick J Webb  
Royal Air Force

Timothy S Wildblood  
Royal Air Force

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Parish Council

Chairman: Barry Dickens  
Clerk: Helen Pratt

# Chairman's letter

By Barry Dickens  
Bucklebury Parish Council

AFTER the parish council decided to purchase a beacon two years ago, with a view to marking D-Day 80 and thereafter important events in Bucklebury, we were delighted to be able to use it again after less than a year.

Following the success of our D-Day 80 commemoration evening in 2024, we decided to follow up with a celebration to mark VE Day 80.

Building on what we had learned from the earlier event, and with Georgina Woods' spirited leadership, we introduced live music, fete-type games, fish and chips, ice cream and local cider. And to make sure people have a tangible reminder of the wonderful evening we enjoyed on May 8, we have produced this VE-Day 80 special edition of The Oaks under Shane McGarvey's inspirational editorship.

We have in mind another event, perhaps next summer, culminating in a beacon lighting, as the two staged so far have gone down well. The beacon could be moved from Chapel Row Green, although quite a few villagers have commented that it looks fine in its current setting.

In other news, it has been relatively quiet regarding the proposed NE Thatcham development. The Planning Inspector found the WBC Local Plan (LP) to be sound in his report published in late April. We now await the almost certain adoption of the LP by WBC on June 10. Thatcham Town Council and other donors have funded a King's Counsel's opinion on the soundness of the LP and there is also a challenge on the grounds of soundness and legality about the proposed development at the bottom of Cold Ash Hill, as the site has very recently received a higher flood-risk assessment.

Following the adoption of the LP, your parish council is ready to play a full and active part in what will be a year or so of masterplanning before any planning application for NE Thatcham can be initiated. We will have one principal aim: to minimise the adverse impact of the development on Bucklebury.

As a parish council we maintain a frequent dialogue with the Estate on the Common. Those who want to know more about the works on the Common and future plans for it should attend one of the 'Walk and Talk' sessions. For more information please visit the parish council website (the address is on page 31).

Many younger residents of our parish make good use of the playpark and pump (cycle) track at the Memorial Hall. Maintaining the track is a costly business so we are



examining laying Tarmac on the track, which would be likely to realise an early return on the investment.

Some years ago the Chapel Row phone box was repurposed as a place to exchange books and timelines of events in Bucklebury's history were displayed on the box's glass panels. Two parishioners have quietly been looking after the phone box and the books therein but it now needs some TLC which, with parish council funding, they and some councillors have volunteered to carry out.

There is growing momentum behind addressing sustainability in the parish. A group of enthusiasts has formed and begun to come up with some initiatives such as holding a local repair café, removing single-use plastics, the establishment of a community orchard and planting wildflowers in gardens and meadows. The group is keen to attract new members via its Sustainable Bucklebury website (see page 25), especially anyone able to participate in or lead new initiatives.

One of our councillors, Mike Morgan, has stepped down, as he is leaving Bucklebury. Mike was a well respected GP in Thatcham and as a councillor Mike gave valued and much appreciated service.





## Best reads in 1945

**Animal Farm**  
George Orwell

**Pippi Longstocking**  
Pippi Langstrump

**Brideshead Revisited**  
Evelyn Waugh

**Stuart Little**  
EB White

**Ross Poldark**  
Winston Graham

**Sparkling Cyanide**  
Agatha Christie

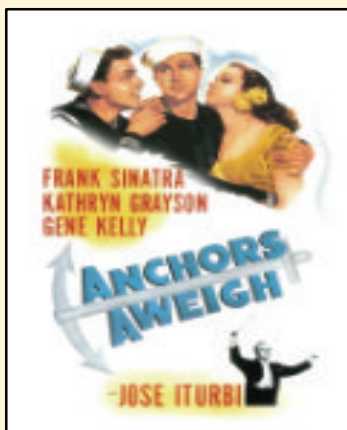
**The Pursuit of Love**  
Nancy Mitford

**The Moomins and the Great Flood**  
Tove Jansson

**The Famous Five Go To Smuggler's Top**  
Enid Blyton

**William and the Brains Trust**  
Richmal Crompton

**The Mystery of the Secret Room**  
Enid Blyton



## Top films in 1945

**Anchors Aweigh**  
Gene Kelly & Frank Sinatra

**And Then There were None**  
Richard Haydn & Barry Fitzgerald

**The Bells of St Mary's**  
Bing Crosby & Ingrid Bergman

**The Body Snatcher**  
Bela Lugosi

**Leave Her To Heaven**  
Gene Tierney & Cornel Wilde

**The Lost Weekend**  
Ray Milland & Jane Wyman

**Mildred Pierce**  
Joan Crawford

**The Picture of Dorian Gray**  
Lowell Gilmore & George Sanders

**The Seventh Veil**  
Ann Todd & Herbert Lom

**Spellbound**  
Gregory Peck

# Kick up your heels and throw up your hats!

By Shane McGarvey

VE DAY was a good enough reason to kick up your heels and throw up your hats, according to Newbury's only five-time Mayor, Frank Doveton Bazett, who set the scene for celebrations while standing on the back of a lorry in the Market Place.

But not before he hailed a 'wonderful' victory over Germany and admonishing the Godless among the huge crowd: 'The most sinful amongst us, the most agnostic, can perceive

something more behind it — the hand of Almighty God'.

The fun started 24 hours earlier when the Government declared a two-day holiday, although celebrations went on much longer and were largely local affairs, with people organising street parties. 'Every side road had its decorations and those on some of the humblest houses and cottages were the best,' reported the Newbury Weekly News. After years of people being yelled at to put that light out, 'Public lighting

was full on and there was a certain amount of floodlighting'.

While celebrations were largely left to communities to organise, someone had the bright idea to hold a dance for 'the young people' at the Corn Exchange but they



**Keep on trucking: Revellers pile on to a lorry to celebrate the day the war in Europe ended after almost six years**

quickly discovered the venue had been booked for three days for an auction furniture sale. However the hall was quickly cleared out on the final day and the dance went ahead on the Wednesday night attended by 700 people, with proceeds to the Newbury Welcome and Welfare Fund. The town authorities waived the 'no dancing after 10pm' rule until midnight. The

Newbury Weekly News reported:

*A very big crowd assembled, mainly young girls between sixteen and just over 20. For the most part their partners were Service men. G.I.s predominated, but there were a lot of British Tommies and not a few Jack Tars. Service girls also showed up well, principally A.T.S and W.A.A.F. They could not keep still for a moment and swung round the dancing floor in varying sized rings, singing at the top of their voices at the same time.*

*In Thatcham: Anvils (sic) were fired in the Broadway and bells of the parish church pealed out merrily as they did at intervals during the day under the leadership of Mr. W. Smith. Flags and streamers appeared as if by magic, almost every house displaying decorations with pleasing effect.*

As for Bucklebury, it seems that for the most part villagers either held private parties or headed into Thatcham and Newbury to join in the festivities, although the NWN reported that:

*A thanksgiving service was held at a Camp at Bucklebury, [probably the site which provided the jump-off point for thousands of Allied troops for D-Day a year earlier]. The Rev O.E. Owen, Rev C.E. Hardy and Captain Nannini took part in the service. The public was well represented and entertained to tea in the Mess afterwards.*



**Street party: Mums all over Britain rustle up a celebration feast, despite rationing, to give the kids a treat on VE Day**

## Party time in Cold Ash too

OUR neighbours in Cold Ash let their hair down too. A contemporary reporter wrote:

*'It was decided to invite children to meet on the Wednesday at 10 o'clock in fancy dress or with any form of musical instrument. The assembly consisted of children from the village, Children's Hospital, St. Mary's Home and St. Finian's Convent, the smaller children being covered by Mr. A. Austin.*

*'The procession moved off headed by an impromptu band on a lorry. Before proceeding very far they got mixed up with a lorry containing German prisoners, who viewed the scene with apparent disapproval, but much to the delight of the kiddies. On arrival at the Recreation ground they engaged in sports and a fancy dress competition, in the races each child received a prize whether winning or not.*

*'Every child also received an orange. The procession re-formed and marched to the Castle Inn where the children all received lemonade, cake and buns.'*



## Churchill's victory speech to the nation

*Prime Minister Winston Churchill made two speeches on VE Day. The first, to announce the war in Europe was over, was broadcast on the wireless at 3pm from Downing Street. Below is the second, when he addressed a crowd of 50,000 from the balcony of the Ministry of Health in Whitehall.*

My dear friends, this is your hour. This is not victory of a party or of any class. It's a victory of the great British nation as a whole. We were the first, in this ancient island, to draw the sword against tyranny. After a while we were left all alone against the most tremendous military power that has been seen. We were all alone for a whole year.

There we stood, alone. Did anyone want to give in? [The crowd shouts 'No.'] Were we down-hearted? ['No!'] The lights went out and the bombs came down. But every man, woman and child in the country had no thought of quitting the struggle. London can take it. So we came back after long months from the jaws of death, out of the mouth of hell, while all the world wondered. When shall the reputation and faith of this generation of English men and women fail? I say that in the long years to come not only will the people of this island but of the world, wherever the bird of freedom chirps in human hearts, look back to what we've done and they will say "do not despair, do not yield to violence and tyranny, march straightforward and die if need be — unconquered". Now we have emerged from one deadly struggle — a terrible foe has been cast on the ground and awaits our judgment and our mercy.

But there is another foe who occupies large portions of the British Empire, a foe stained with cruelty and greed — the Japanese. I rejoice we can all take a night off today and another day tomorrow. Tomorrow our great Russian allies will also be celebrating victory and after that we must begin the task of rebuilding our hearth and homes, doing our utmost to make this country a land in which all have a chance, in which all have a duty, and we must turn ourselves to fulfill our duty to our own countrymen, and to our gallant allies of the United States who were so foully and treacherously attacked by Japan.

We will go hand and hand with them.

Even if it is a hard struggle we will not be the ones who will fail.

Flanked by Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin, Winston Churchill hails the thousands thronging Whitehall with his famous 'V for victory' salute on VE Day

'Everybody was shouting, "We want Winnie!" It was fantastic. He came out to the balcony and he saluted to us with his cigar, and he stopped there and said something, and he went back in and we still fetched him out. And then we got to Buckingham Palace and it was, "We want Liz, we want George". Oh, it was absolutely fantastic. There were people up lamp posts singing Land of Hope and Glory, there were Yanks there, there were everybody. Everybody. It was marvellous.'

*Eyewitness account as recalled in BBC's People's War*



# Why my street party went with a bang!

EVEN today, 80 years after the end of World War II, there is still an echo of the streetwise kid about Adrian Cornell, with an energy that belies his 90 years.

'I was nearly 11 when the war finished and by then I was streetwise and all the boys were all streetwise. Nothing could touch us,' says Adrian, who grew up in Edmonton in North London.

It's not difficult to imagine him and his pals playing on bomb sites, collecting lumps of shrapnel and other 'treasures'.

But, he adds: 'Not long after the day war was declared, my dad, who worked for London Transport said to my mum, "I've got to go now Gert and I don't know when I'll see you again".

'He was a Territorial and he had to go on day one and I don't know to this day where he went. I never thought to ask him really.

'The road I lived in was split into two, but it was more than a mile long, so when VE Day came there was more than one party. One of the parties was in the stretch of road that I lived in. It was all trestles and tables and all the food was provided. Whatever you could get. We were very sparsely fed during the war and everything was rationed right down to the last quarter of an ounce.

'So anyway, we have a party and lots of jollifications and it's surprising actually the resources that suddenly appeared.

'My mother was very good at getting things and she had got me a secondhand chemistry set, and I latched on to making gunpowder.

'You could get the ingredients at the chemist: saltpetre, and then there was carbon, which I



**Big bang theory: Adrian Cornell knew how to party when he was a young lad in Edmonton (inset)**

used to get from old batteries, an Army Quartermaster, and he brought me dummy bullets, cartridge cases and all sorts of things like that. I filled a 303 cartridge case with gunpowder and crimped the end.

'On the day of the party, the big fire we had was a long way from the end of the tables, so I thought, "this is a wag", so I excused myself and walked past the fire and threw the thing into it. Of course, there's a God-

'My dad used to bring me all sorts of things home, him being

used to get from old batteries, an Army Quartermaster, and he brought me dummy bullets, cartridge cases and all sorts of things like that. I filled a 303 cartridge case with gunpowder and crimped the end.

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## Big Effie took on Germans

'ON the railway line from Liverpool Street to Cambridge, they had a rail mounted ack-ack gun and searchlight,' says Adrian. 'My father's daytime job was as quartermaster and his night-time job was commander of the heavy ack-ack gun.

'He had an all-female crew: Big Effie, who was a gun layer — she used to bring the shells from the magazines — and Dinah, she was elevator and there was another girl who used to swing the gun around. He eventually went to Thorpe Bay at Southend to shoot down doodlebugs.'

Almighty bang and a great big lump of wood flew out, and I thought "Oh my Gawd". I'm glad it was quite a long way away.

'Well the next day when the fire was cleared away, there was a hole in the road three feet wide and three inches deep.

'It was a concrete road and the council came along and filled it with Tarmac and for many many years until they put a black cap on the whole road that big black patch was there.

'But no one ever knew how it got there and I wasn't telling or they'd have carted me off to the police station. It was a wonderful party though.'

**Interview by Shane McGarvey**

# I was determined to get Father's first kiss

FOR young Margaret Cox, her childhood ambition crystallised to a single moment — her steely determination to get her father's first kiss when he came home from war.

The Rev William Cox, who joined the Army in 1937, served with the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry in France and Belgium before being evacuated from Dunkirk and eventually posted to India.

Bucklebury villager Margaret (now Wyatt) said: 'My father had been stationed at Douai Abbey in France and joined the fighting as the Army advanced towards Belgium, burying many soldiers on the way. It was very important that he knew where people were buried and he recorded that accurately.

'They got as far as Brussels and then they had to retreat. They were in the rearguard group so they were smashing up the cars on the way back and all the time my father was keeping a record.

'They got a long way back towards the beaches when the regiment ran out of petrol and had to go back behind enemy lines to get it, successfully because my father knew where they had buried it.

'When my father was in India we were in Peterborough because my father's church was there. Now, my mother came from Wantage, and my grandmother came from East Isley and our whole family were down here, the whole lot of them, so we were isolated in Peterborough. We were always being told off [by air raid wardens] because we had cracks in our curtains.

'I grew to love my father from afar and remember after the war, when my father was back, going to an important ceremony in Oxford town hall to honour his regiment.

'That period of my life was not particularly pleasant but my grandfather was a farmer and his farm was in Southmoor and so I had a marvellous time when I went there.

'My grandmother had five grandchildren there with no parents. That was a really happy time of my life. The farmers had good food. When we lived in Peterborough, we had margarine and rations. When I went there [Southmoor] they shot rabbits, they had pigs. Everything was there. but there wasn't room for me to sleep, so I used to go



**Poppy love: Margaret Wyatt with her father's photo and her ceramic poppy**

on the back of a motorbike through Southmoor to stay with an aunt because she had more bedrooms. For a child, this was lovely — in your pyjamas and no crash helmet on the back of a motorbike.

'On VE Day everybody else was home, but my father was one of the last to come home. He wasn't even back home for VJ Day, when I saw the crowds celebrating outside Peterborough Cathedral.'

It would be almost two more years before Margaret saw her father again. 'Eventually the message came back that Father was coming home,' she recalled. 'This was on one of the last troop ships. I can remember saying to my mother and my sister Shirley, "I'll get the first kiss" and they laughed because I was more reserved than my sister, but I was so determined. So we got to Peterborough station and there was only one way to see him first and that was to climb up on the luggage so I can remember scaling vast amounts of luggage so I had a huge view of everybody — and I did get the first kiss.'

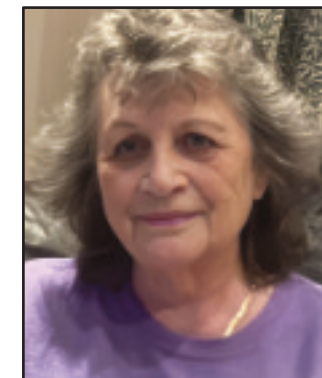
**Interview by Shane McGarvey**

## Who's that man in your bed, Mum?

IN 1943, Janet Price's father, William Russell was the youngest Regimental Sergeant Major in the British Army. He was three times mentioned in despatches between September 1943 and July 1945.

'I know what one of them was for, getting people out of a gas-filled building, one was for getting people off the side of Mount Etna when it erupted and I don't know what the other one was for,' said Jan (pictured).

'He saw me when I was a tiny baby and I didn't see him until he arrived home after the war. He was expected on October 5 but



arrived on the fourth late at night. I woke up the next morning to find this strange man in bed with my mother. I'm sure she must've shown me photographs of him but I do remember being startled.

'I remember sitting up in bed with lots of presents that he bought me. One of them was a 3D scene of the interior of a peasant kitchen in Italy, absolutely beautiful, with a pot hanging from the fire and two peasant dolls.

'My mother kept a diary all through the war but on the day it ended, she just wrote 'V'. Most of her diary seemed to consist of me being taken to one neighbour or another when she went shopping.

'Everything was rationed and so when something or other suddenly appeared word went all round the village and people looked after each others children while they went to buy whatever it was.'





# VE DAY 80



More than 200 photos are available at [benocphotography.shootproof.com/gallery/VEDay80thBucklebury/](https://benocphotography.shootproof.com/gallery/VEDay80thBucklebury/)



## Milestones in summer of 1945...

April 30: With Soviet troops less than 500 yards from his Führerbunker, Adolf Hitler commits suicide.

**May 2: The Soviet Union announces the fall of Berlin.**

**May 9: German forces in the Channel Islands surrender. The Soviet Union mark VE Day.**

**May 11: German forces in Czechoslovakia surrender.**

**May 23: Winston Churchill forms a caretaker Tory Government, ending the wartime coalition.**

**May 28: Irish-born 'Lord Haw-Haw' is charged with treason for his English-language broadcasts on German radio. He was hanged in January 1946.**

**June 18: Demobilisation of Forces begins.**

**June 22: U.S. forces overcome the last major pockets of Japanese resistance on Okinawa Island, ending one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Lt General Mitsuru Ushijima, the Japanese commander, commits suicide rather than surrender.**

**July 1: Germany is divided between the Allied occupying forces.**

**July 26: Labour win the first General Election since 1935 with a 146 majority.**

August 6: The first atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima by US B29 Superfortress 'Enola Gay'. It is estimated that 200,000 people die as a result.

**August 9: A second atomic bomb 'Fat Man' is dropped on the Japanese military port of Nagasaki by US Superfortress 'Bockscar'; with the loss of another 200,000 lives.**

**August 15: Prime Minister Clement Atlee announces the surrender of Japan, marked by VJ Day.**

# End of war sparked diamond love story

FOR Brian and Rita Wall, who were 11 and 10 years old on VE Day, the surrender of Germany and later Japan brought an end to the deprivations and horrors of war.

Also a welcome relief from cod-liver oil, a supplement vital to children's health amid wartime rationing. Rita recalled: 'We had to have a tablespoon of cod liver oil every day and I tell you it is not nice. My mother then bought us what they called cod liver oil with malt and that was thick stuff and we would have that at home.'

'I remember going to my aunt's on one occasion and she had us all lined up with a spoon to give us our cod liver oil and when she got to me I said, "we don't have that, we have cod-liver oil with malt at home" and she just said, "you are in my home now, open your mouth" and in it went. I couldn't look at a bottle of cod-liver oil for years!'

But back to VE Day and, recalled Rita: 'On the actual day that the war ended, I think in the beginning we were all taken aback by it. When it was announced we were waiting, we didn't have television, so we all sat by the radio and we were told that it was over. Everyone was a little bit dazed by it, we didn't know what to do. Suddenly it percolated around.'

'In our road there was only my sister and me as children because most of the children had been evacuated in 1941. My mother wouldn't let us go. The children went to school on whatever morning it was and the coaches were there and they just took the children.'

'When you got to where you were going you were just issued out to people in the hope that they would take you on. Some went as far as Scotland.'

'On the actual day as I say, it took a while, people gradually started coming out of their houses, shaking hands and laughing, everything was jolly. My mother went up into the roof and brought down a whole load of pennant pieces. We decked them all around the outside of our house.'

Neither Rita nor Brian can remember extravagant street parties in 1945 because 'we didn't have any food, I guess,' said Rita. 'I do remember people lit bonfires to celebrate VE Day,' said Brian. 'But they were bringing out chairs and other furniture from their houses, not rubbish, but good stuff to burn.'

Rita continued: 'In the autumn my mother went out somewhere and brought back red, white and blue plants for planting out. She let my sister and me dig holes in the front garden down the drive putting a blue one, a red one and a white one all the way down the path.'

'We had blackout curtains because you couldn't let any light show, so they didn't know where the cities were', she laughed.

'If you had a chink of light showing you had ARP men coming round, banging on the door, "Put that light out". If you didn't do it within minutes you were fined.'

'So on that night that we had been told the war was over my mother pulled all the blackout curtains down from every window in the house and put all the lights on. She went into my grandparents house and did the same.'

Peace also brought fate into play, determining that two strangers would be thrown together, leading to a love affair that endures to this day. Rita, who lived on the outskirts of Bristol, and Brian, a Caversham boy, celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary last July.

Brian said: 'Directly the war was over in May my father got some leave. Both families went to Weymouth and at 10 and 11 we met. We were in the same bed and breakfast accommodation.'

Rita added: 'They gave us an evening meal but the food was pretty awful. Every night we were thinking "what is the soup going to be tonight, dishwasher: pink or red?"'

Brian's father Cecil, had started Carnival Stores in Caversham before he joined up and after the war he restarted the business.

Rita said: 'When they were starting up the business again, his mum would ask mine "Can you take Brian for the school holidays?" to get him out of the way.'

Years of train journeys between Reading Bristol then followed until love blossomed and they became engaged when they were both 18.

'Even when we got married in 1954 we still had rations,' said Rita. 'We had no sweets or chocolates or things like that even after the war. My father used to stop sometimes and get us a comic but no sweets came.'

'But we got good teeth!'

Interview by Shane McGarvey

Rita and Brian Wall recall their memories of VE Day and how the end of the war brought them together

Picture by BEN O'CONNELL



## Educating Rita... and the strife of Brian!

'IF the air raid siren went off while we were at school, we would go down the fire escape and sit underneath the playground and just there for a couple of hours with just candles and we would do tables and spelling. I hated it,' said Rita.

'But most nights we were in the shelter at home. My father built an Anderson Shelter, which was something you could go and get the plans for. He was a bit of an engineer, my father, and you would go and get the plans and build your own shelter in the garden. It was two or three feet below the ground and the rest was above. Everybody thought he was a bit crazy because we were still, with Mr Chamberlain, hoping it wouldn't happen but he was quite convinced it would.'

'In 1940 the first siren went. We

jumped out of bed, my father wasn't there of course, he was out doing his war work but my mother would have a basket ready with drinks and food. There was a cat, a dog, two children and a huge cage because someone had given us two budgerigars for some reason and we took that as well. We went down to the garden, jumped into the shelter into two and a half feet of water because nobody had told us about drainage, only about how to build the thing.'

'My grandparents lived next door to us and they had a much bigger garden so my grandfather built a proper underground shelter. We used to run into his garden and go down there where we had beds, whereas in our little Anderson Shelter we just sat in chairs.'

Brian has his own, just as scary memories of what happened when the balloon went up. 'The school I was at, they brought a double decker bus. All the children had to go in, you put your gas mask on and they released tear gas.'

'They're checking that your gas mask actually worked and did that about once every six months. If someone started to cry they got them out quick. I remember that bus, because I was terrified.'

'If the air raid siren went off they got all the children in the playground, about 100 of us, and we had to march, not run, in what you call a school crocodile to the shelters, which were about three-quarters of a mile away and that made us a real sitting target for the bombers.'



# After VE Day, our lives started up again and never sort of stopped

VE DAY heralded a new beginning after World War Two for local boy Reg Parker, who, with his pals, made Bucklebury Common his playground.

‘There was a gang of us, about eight of us I think, who used to go round the army camps,’ recalled Reg, who was 14 in 1945. ‘Unfortunately there’s only about two of us left.’

From Tutts Clump they ventured through a Common populated by friendly invaders from North America – Canadians and ‘Yanks’ who, with their British Army hosts, levelled huge areas of Bucklebury Common to accommodate thousands of tons of military hardware ready for D-Day.

‘When you came through the Common Gate, where Southend Bradfield stopped and Bucklebury started, they had American troops there,’ continued Reg.

‘As you came into Bucklebury on the right there were ack-ack guns and a searchlight battery and all the tents

both sides of the road. You came up the Common where a driveway goes down to where the Iliffes used to live; that’s where the Americans had a cookhouse and a small hospital and a cinema.

‘On the right hand side [of the road] there was quite a big space there and they used to insulate all the lorries, waterproofing the engines because they were going to France.

‘Then you came up to the Bladebone and past that is where they had the big car park. Massive it was, hundreds and hundreds of cars, bikes, lorries, tanks, Bren gun carriers, anti-aircraft guns; everything imaginable ready for D-Day. They had bulldozers up there and levelled it all out and parked all their vehicles there, a sort of REME [Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers] and patch-up job. The British Army had different types of sheds and they had a big

cookhouse there and a recreation hall for the troops.

‘One day all those troops were there and the next they were gone. Italian prisoners of war were moved in to work on the farms.

‘On VE Day everybody was rejoicing and lighting big bonfires and parties and drinking and that. The pub down the road here used to be the Three Crowns and there was the Bladebone further down. They all had big parties, big bonfires, street parties and all sorts of thing like that. They had a big one in Tutts Clump which I went to and all the people mingled together and everybody was happy because the war was over.

‘All the women got together and brought a few things like sausages and bacon

**REG might have tucked into one of the more unusual sandwich fillings made for 1945 street party tables – mock banana. It was made with parsnips boiled to within an inch of their lives. You then mashed them up (at which point they looked a little like banana, with a bit of imagination) and then added banana flavouring. Er, yummy?**

sandwiches. They pooled all their coupons and pulled together for the big parties. If I remember rightly they had a big party up here by Peaches store.

‘After VE Day, life started up again and never sort of stopped, gradually improving. The war was still going on in the Far East but we didn’t much think about that, we knew it was going on and that was it.

‘Afterwards, when I left school, I worked at a garage down at Theale but I got fed up with that. I wanted the outdoor life, back on the farm; Chalk Pit Farm, Benyon’s it used to be. But I knew if I left the farm I could go in the Army, which I wanted to do. I left there and went on the building [trade].

‘A note was sent to me saying if I didn’t return to farm work I’d be called up [for National Service] so I stayed on the building. They sent me my papers and travel ticket and off I went to Aldershot, then I went to Yeovilton and came home on



Country life: Reg Parker recalls VE Day

leave and then went back to Bordon, got equipped and went to northern Italy, a place called Trieste.

‘I was a driving instructor and got promoted to lance corporal. I had three Land Rovers, an ambulance and a staff car to look after and make sure they were all ready for action. I did my time out there and came back and met my wife and got married in 1958. My wife Barbara used to work up at the shop. She passed away four years ago.’ Reg paused before adding: ‘That was a sad day that was.’

Gathering his thoughts, Reg was back in 1945, remembering a life in rural England very different from today. ‘In those days there were hardly any houses it was all fields. There weren’t that great amount of people up here during wartime, towards the end, because the men were all off fighting.

‘My father was in the 1st Airborne Division and he used to load the gliders with spares and ammunition and then fly out and unload and come back and load up again. He went to Germany, Dunkirk and all them places, wherever they wanted the spares. He did two or three trips a day. He was at Harwell because that was a big airstrip, he was at Membury, he went up north somewhere and then Gloucester. He wasn’t home for VE Day but came back about a month later when they got their own clothes and got sorted out.

‘It was interesting times though it was sad too. We used to talk to the Yanks, who were going off to war.’

Interview by Shane McGarvey

## Top of the Pops 1945 edition...

1 Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ra

Bing Crosby

2 Inka Dinka Doo

Jimmy Durante

3 Together

Issy Bonn

4 My Guy’s Come Back/

Opus 1. Ted Heath

5 Tico-Tico

Edmundo Ros

6 Juke Box Saturday Night

Glen Miller

7 My Guy’s Come Back

Joe Loss

8 The Trolley Song

Judy Garland

9 My Guy’s Come Back

Geraldo

10 Don’t Fence Me In/

The Three Caballeros

Bing Crosby & The Andrews Sisters

## And how Vera Lynn (& friends) helped win the war...

We’ll Meet Again

There’ll Be Bluebirds Over

The White Cliffs of Dover

It’s A Lovely Day Tomorrow

A Nightingale Sang In

Berkeley Square

Vera Lynn

We’re Gonna Hang Out The

Washing On The Siegfried

Line

Run Rabbit Run,

We’ll Smile Again

Flanagan and Allen

American Patrol

Moonlight Serenade

Glenn Miller

There’ll Always Be An

England

Alfred Piccaver

Lambeth Walk\*

Eddie Cantor

Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy

The Andrews Sisters

Now Is The Hour

Gracie Fields

\*Britain’s Ministry of Information made a spoof film called Lambeth Walk - Nazi Style, making SS troops look like they were marching to the tune. You can find it on YouTube.



Poignant: Aisling Bucknell leads the tributes to the fallen of World War II

# Villagers come together to make a night to remember

By Georgina Woods

CHAPEL ROW GREEN was bedecked in bunting and flags on the evening of May 8 in readiness for the VE/VJ 80th celebrations.

About 400 parishioners turned out to celebrate the event on a glorious evening.

Preparations began a few months ago when Jason Allum borrowed his brother Marcus’ trailer to use as a stage for the event. He then set about repairing it and making it a stage.

Jason was also instrumental in getting the beacon ready. Thanks to the generosity of Bucklebury Estate he had enough wood; Matthew Prince’s excellent telehandling skills meant he could load the beacon with the wood and his daughter’s curtains gave the fire a good start. doused in diesel meant the wood would burn well. The beacon was ready to be lit.

Jason Allum, Phil Teal, David Southgate, Chris Willett, Graham Pask and Helen Pratt all helped with setting up on the day. Bill Bucknell had very kindly mown the grass on the Green and lent us a ladder so flags, bunting and spotlights could be put up. Marcus Allum brought the stage and chairs, which were cleaned by Colin, Hugo and Fergus Heslop and David Southgate managed to set up his sound system with very little fuss, which made a huge difference to the evening.

The musicians from Kennet School Band got the evening off to a fantastic start and everyone enjoyed playing skittles, the games lent by Bradfield May Fayre, and trying to win the tombola and the Tommy raffle. A big thank you to Ruth from Upper Bucklebury, Chris from Beenham and Gavin from Cold Ash for giving up their time to provide First Aid cover. Thanks also to the Blakey/Burger Family, the Allums, Allison Butcher, the Brims, the Spours, the Clarkes, Sheyni and Anna Hodges and Lesley Windmill and Nicki and

Tim Williams for running these games, we couldn’t have done it without you. The History Society Tent and the Jeeps brought along by Steve Beeson and Paul Adams were a great addition to the event and much admired.

The audience enjoyed their picnics, fish suppers from Go Fish, ice cream from Dave’s Ices, cakes from the Guides and drinks from Tutts Clump Cider and the Bladebone.

Parishioners who were children in 1945 had recalled their memories and some of these were read out by local children of a similar age. Honour Yarrow, Aurelia Harris, Elspeth Harris, Teddy Emery, William Peters and Florence Blakey read beautifully and really brought home how mixed the emotions were on VE Day. The children were each presented with a miniature Tommy figure kindly donated by Hurstbourne Forge, as was the big Tommy for the raffle. Other children designed bunting for a competition, which was won by Freddie Cox.

Beenham Wind Orchestra braved the cold and played some great tunes and as dusk began to fall, Simon Peters piped the Bradfield College Cadets from the Bladebone to the stage so that we could all listen to the official VE Day tributes read by Jenny Ainsworth, Nigel Colman, Aisling Bucknell, Steve Manson, ‘Hash’ Shingadia and Willie Hartley-Russell, followed by a prayer from Rev Steve Newbold.

As the beacon was lit at 9.30pm by Jason Allum and Barry Dickens, Sandra Nicholls’ choir sang ‘I Vow to Thee My Country’ beautifully before we fell silent to reflect on what we owed our forebears from 80 years ago.

The event raised more than £600 for SSAFA and the Guides sold tea and fantastic cakes and other goodies to raise funds for their trip to the Netherlands.

Ben O’Connell has taken some wonderful photographs of the event, which you can see throughout this special edition of The Oaks.





When WC Fields said never work with children or animals, he was warning that they will ALWAYS steal the show. From the girls and boys who read the VE Day memories to the adorable dogs, they absolutely smashed it at VE Day80 in these wonderful pictures captured by Ben O’Connell.





# When Bucklebury partied like it was 1995



Tuck in: Villagers celebrate 30 years ago

THIRTY years ago villagers got together to mark VE Day50 with a celebration that went on for three days. The Newbury Weekly News of May 11, 1995 reported that... 'Bucklebury's VE Day anniversary events started with an exhibition of memorabilia in Bucklebury Chapel at Turner's Green on Saturday afternoon, followed by tea and refreshments and a singsong of wartime favourites. A master piper played the victory march, and Mr Gilbert Wale sounded the bugle. 'The 160-year-old chapel was narrowly missed by a bomb during the war. On Sunday evening it was packed

for a service of thanksgiving. Villagers gathered to remember those who gave their lives as part of the cost of peace and freedom. On Monday afternoon, the Victory Room VE Day fete got under way at the recreation ground with a peal of bells from Bucklebury Church. Football competitions saw Ashampstead as the local winners, and Mr Alan House flew over the field in his 1954 Provost plane to perform a victory roll. There was a display of Morris dancing by the Kennet Morris Men, judo display by pupils of the primary school, and tug of war. A display of memorabilia told the story of wartime Bucklebury.'

# KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

By Shane McGarvey

AS BRITAIN rearmed in preparation for war in the late 1930s, it had to be business as usual for Bucklebury Parish Council, who had all the usual minutiae of village life to deal with, including repairs to paths, fencing, hedge cutting and burials. A morning spent at the Royal Berkshire Archives researching parish council minutes of the 1940s revealed a complaint about Lady Collins making a bridlepath on a footpath and a farmer 'drawing mangolds across the Common' to Hopgood's Farm. The clerk was instructed to write to complainant Mr Haines and reassure him the path through Briff Copse was a footpath not a bridleway but in Hopgood's Green the farmer had a right of access to his farm. A Mr Butler wrote to complain that Mr Stacey had taken to shooting on the Common on Sundays and it was a danger to the public. The perils of war were brought home in 1940 when the district council wrote to ask if our councillors knew of a building which could be used for the temporary accommodation of bodies. Parish councillor Major MacKinnon suggested a building at the Old Manor although 'it has no running water'. The Major also informed his colleagues that he had been appointed Voluntary Food Officer for the parish in the event of an invasion, while a Newbury firm was admonished for testing Bren Gun carriers on the Common. While it was accepted this was necessary, the council asked 'could they do it without chewing up the turf in front of people's houses'.

Bradfield RDC wrote in 1941 suggesting that 'under the present circumstances it might be found necessary to plough up playing fields'. The clerk recorded in the minutes that 'It was the unanimous opinion of the council that there was quite a lot of space in the parish that could be cultivated before interfering with the children's playing field'. Our councillors carried on ensuring that life in Bucklebury ran as smoothly as possible until 1944, when the war turned up on our doorstep. The Common was requisitioned for the Vehicle Repair Depot (VRD) and thousands of American, Canadian and British service personnel descended to prepare for D-Day. Flattening the Common was not universally welcomed and councillors wasted no time after the war to get it reinstated. They wrote to the Secretary of State for War insisting that 'the VRD should be abolished as speedily as possible and the Common restored as far as possible to its former condition and returned for public use'. And 'that the stoppage of traffic for the production of military passes should cease forthwith and that the road across the common should be freed from all obstructions'. In January 1945 BPC momentarily decided that the area near The Three Crowns pub (now The Cottage Inn) should be called Upper Bucklebury. The clerk was

instructed to write to the head postmaster in Reading telling him to rename Bucklebury Common Post Office, Upper Bucklebury Post Office. They also let Ordnance Survey know so they could change their maps accordingly. Phone boxes were going to be installed at the Camp crossroads and the Slade, while housing was being planned for Round Field and Hatch Lane, with a view to settling many people displaced by war, including squatters who had moved into the Nissen huts left behind after D-Day. There is no mention of VE Day or VJ Day in minutes for the summer and autumn of 1945. By December the owner of a typewriter loaned to the council wanted it back so the clerk was told to buy a new one in Reading but not to spend more than £20. (Thanks to inflation, the purchasing power of £20 in 1945 corresponds to more than £1,000 today so I hope you still have it, Helen!). Bucklebury finally caught up with winning the war in 1946 when a letter arrived from the Ministry of Health regarding peace celebrations and in April: 'It was agreed to organise a sports meeting for the 6th of July to be run in conjunction with the flower show and call it a victory celebration. Mr W. Strut proposed and Mr A. Millson seconded that the council guarantee up to £20 in case of out of pocket expenses". Wartime effects on the Common were still felt as late as 1949, when a Dr Ashman wrote regarding an outbreak of 'serious lacerations caused by barbed wire on the camp periphery'. Happily by April it was stated that most of the barbed wire had been removed by scouts in Bob-A-Job week.

Parish councillor Jason Allum recalls that his late father, Reg, was too young at 14 to serve but he was employed at Theale aerodrome (Sheffield Farm) as a gofer. 'The very basic grass airfield adjoined the Kennet & Avon canal,' says Jason. 'When my father worked there, it was 26 EFTS (Elementary Flying Training School) which retrained pilots to be instructors on Tiger Moths. My father cycled to and from Theale every day from Cock Lane, Southend Bradfield on his three-speed Raleigh bicycle. Having cycled over Common Hill on May 8, 1945, he was greeted by an officer with: "What are you doing here Reg? The war's over – go home". So he cycled all the way back.'



Villagers turned out in their hundreds to celebrate VE Day80 on what turned out to be a chilly night as the sun went down at Chapel Row on May 8. Thanks to everyone who came to see the beacon lit and raised funds for the SSAFA charity





# Some of them may be small but they're all quite talented

(with apologies to Matilda)

By Lucie Wilson  
Principal, WBBS

WHAT a fantastic term it has been so far at West Berkshire Ballet School! As we approach the final weeks of the academic year, we want to take a moment to celebrate the hard work and talent of our students—and keep you up to date on the exciting things still to come.

Huge congratulations to all the dancers who took part in our recent production of Matilda! Your energy, commitment, and creativity lit up the stage and left our audience absolutely spellbound.

From expressive solos to powerful ensemble numbers, every performer brought Roald

Dahl's beloved story to life in the most magical way.

Thank you to our dedicated teachers, backstage volunteers, costume helpers and, of course, our supportive families. Shows like this are only possible through teamwork — and what a team we have!

As we shift from the stage to the studio, our focus now turns to ballet exam preparation. Students have been working diligently on their technique and artistry, and we are incredibly proud of their progress. Exams provide a valuable opportunity for

growth, discipline, and personal achievement. We encourage all students to attend every remaining class to feel fully prepared and supported.

As always, we are so proud of

our dance family. Whether the dancer just took their first bow or is preparing for their next exam, we are so proud to support their journey through dance.

[westberkshireballetschool.com](http://westberkshireballetschool.com)



**Class acts: Cast of the ballet school's production of Matilda**



**Scene from Matilda: 'Brucey ate the whole cake'**

## Common clearing and Parish litter-pick party

**Let's keep Bucklebury beautiful. Come and help clear litter from the paths around the Common.**

**Equipment will be provided, and there will be a skip to take the rubbish.**

**Plus...**

**FREE refreshments afterwards**

**Saturday, October 4  
Meet at the Memorial Hall in  
Upper Bucklebury at 2pm  
Mrs. H. Pratt – Parish Clerk  
Tel. 01635 863581**



**Keen: Cougars Under 15s prior to a training session... and their new club badge**

## Girls sign for new-look Cougars

FC BUCKLEBURY COUGARS are expanding ready for the new 2025-2026 football season and we will be running more teams than ever with 12, all the way from Under 6s up to our new women's team.

We have some great opportunities for both players and for volunteers to help with our teams next season — nearly anyone can get involved next season whether playing, coaching or just helping on match days.

These teams are looking for both players and adult helpers: Under 7s (current school year 1), and Under 8s (year 2).

We also have spaces for new players in the following teams: Under 9s (current

school year 3), Under 13 girls (years 6 and 7) and FC Bucklebury Sabres, our new women's team for over 16s.

Our adult helper roles would suit any mums, dads, or grandparents keen to get involved with a local community football club and have discounted membership for their child.

We are an FA affiliated and accredited club and will help volunteers gain FA qualifications if they would like to help with coaching.

In April, our new Under 6s started training at Bucklebury Recreation Ground on Wednesday evenings, and we already have a great group of keen young footballers getting ready for five-a-side

matches from September.

On Tuesday evenings our new girls' team is regularly training and getting ready for 11-a-side league games next season.

All our teams have been playing in local summer tournaments, which provide small sides matches and are great fun.

We will soon be holding our annual presentation day at Bucklebury Recreation Ground where all our players can celebrate their success this season.

It is a great time to get in touch if you know any keen youth footballers, regardless of background or ability, and we welcome enquiries for all age groups.

**Graham Loader**  
[graham@fccougars.com](mailto:graham@fccougars.com)

## LED brings net gain for players

BUCKLEBURY Tennis Club recently held a barbecue at the courts, when around 30 members were able to enjoy each other's company both on and off the courts. We are hoping to hold another one towards the end of the summer.

Our major project this summer will be switching to LED floodlighting to substantially reduce the charge to members who use the floodlights for their own play and, of course, benefit us on club evenings and for matches.

Drills with coach Damian Lane continue to be very popular, with sessions on Monday and occasional Thursday evenings. For details contact our drills organiser Karen Pegg on [kppegg61@gmail.com](mailto:kppegg61@gmail.com).

Junior coaching with Chris Llewellyn continues on Wednesday afternoons in term time. Again, for details contact Karen Pegg.

The club has entered teams in the Newbury and District Summer League and the Berkshire League.

If you are of a suitable standard and would like to be considered for matches, contact Norman Casson at [normancasson@aol.com](mailto:normancasson@aol.com).

New members are welcome at any time — information is on the club website, the address is at the end of this report.

Membership rates for the current year up to March 31, 2026 are as follows: Family £95; Adult £65; Student £25; Junior £15. If you have any queries about joining, contact

### Tennis Club

membership secretary Norman Casson (as above).

We hold club evenings on Tuesdays and Fridays as well as men's and Ladies' Mix-ins on Saturday mornings and Monday mornings respectively.

As a member you can book a court for your own recreational play by using the booking link on the club website.

If you have any general queries relating to the Club, please contact the club Chair Rosie Macgregor below.

**rmac1951@gmail.com**  
[www.buckleburytennisclub.com](http://www.buckleburytennisclub.com)



## Take a walk on the mild side

### Bucklebury Walkers

IF you fancy a bit of gentle exercise in the fresh air, with genial company and the lure of a pub lunch at the end, Bucklebury Walkers could be the answer.

Organiser Helen Relf says: 'We are a mixed group of walkers who meet on the first Thursday of each month at 10am and walk for three to four miles or join us at 10.30am for a shorter walk, about 2 miles.'

'We have had a mixture of walks again this year in all sorts of weather, always enjoying a coffee and lunch at The Cottage Inn afterwards.'

'The short walk in May took us down to the end of Long Grove to see the wonderful bluebells.'

Contact Helen for more details or just turn up at any of the walks – the diary is on page 31 and on the village website. These are social walks and you are responsible for your own safety.

**Helen Relf 01635 867619**  
**grannyrelf@btinternet.com**

### St Martin's Club

THE club have indoor meetings at The Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury in February, March and November. Visitors are welcome at a cost of £3. Coach trips start in April.

Organiser Helen Relf says: 'February saw the return of the Rev Jill Bentall talking on The Last Romance and in March we had a visit from Bob Whelpton, Chocolate Man, with goodies to purchase. Both had a good attendance and were well received.'

'Our trips commenced in April with a visit to Salisbury, including the cathedral. In May we went to Cheltenham with a train ride to Broadway. We are due to go to Warwick Castle in June and Brighton in July. If there is space on the coach we welcome visitors at the full cost of the outing.'

Contact Helen Relf (above) for more information about the club.



**Time travellers:** Sandra Nicholls, Jenny Ainsworth, Lesley Rolfe and Jerry Rolfe get into the VE Day spirit

# Reliving the past takes the biscuit

## History Group

By Sandra Nicholls

WE were delighted to be involved with the VE Day80 celebrations at Chapel Row on May 8, when our History Tent had lots of local World War II information as well as memorabilia from the era.

Jenny Ainsworth and I, dressed as Land Girls, enjoyed chatting to people about their own experiences or in the case of younger people, their thoughts about the time.

Sitting in an old wheelchair was very uncomfortable according to one 'patient' but eating a ginger biscuit made from an original 1940s recipe seemed to help!

Following recent talks by Dr David Peacock on the Second Battle of Newbury and Sarah Sommerville's interesting and amusing account of working in historic houses we are planning some more visits.

Our first visit of the year was to the Dell Gardens in Bucklebury in May. The Dell (pictured, right) was created by Arthur Sutton of Sutton Seeds in 1900.

He is said to have employed 60 gardeners, who constructed the garden in one year. It became overgrown during World War II and was then devastated in the great storm of January 1990.

We have more talks planned, including Dr David Edwards-Moss on his involvement with the Falkland Islands on September 18



and Mark Thompson on the history of the Bluecoat School, Thatcham on November 13. Both start at 7.30pm in the Victory Room.

Next year we have booked a visit to Englefield House and intend to use the Memorial Hall in Upper Bucklebury for some talks.

We now have our own website (address below). It is at an early stage but still worth a visit.

There are two new local heritage sites: John Morton's Chapel in Turners Green and the air raid shelter on Briff Lane. The Bucklebury cemetery chapel and cast-iron grave markers are also on the local heritage list.

We would really like some help with managing data. Please get in contact if you have some time and would be happy to share your computer expertise.

Looking forward to further historical achievements!

**Sandranicholls64@outlook.com**  
**0118 9712555**

[hugofox.com/community/bucklebury-history-group-20816/home](http://hugofox.com/community/bucklebury-history-group-20816/home)

## It's no fuss to take the bus

BUCKLEBURY and the surrounding area has a new on-demand bus service called **Community Connect**. It runs when you want it to, not to a timetable and while a similar service has been operating in the North Downs area of West Berkshire for some time, this service has been running since last November.

Supported by West Berkshire Council and the Government and focused on Thatcham, the aims are to improve local access from rural areas to local town centres, improve connections to other bus and rail services and encourage more environmentally-friendly journeys.

The easiest way to book the



service is to download the **Community Connect App** and simply chose where you want to go to, when you want to travel and your starting point. You will get a reply which tells you where to catch the bus and when to be there. You can also book the service by phone or email up to a week in advance.

The service operates from 9am to 2.45pm, Monday to Friday and is fully accessible for wheelchairs. The fare is £2 per journey – free after 9.30am if you have a bus pass.

It serves our surgery at Chapel Row, Aldermaston, Midgham and Thatcham stations and Thatcham town centre. It connects with buses along the A4 to Reading and Newbury.

Sustainable Bucklebury backs this service and encourages all its supporters to make use of it.

**West Berks Community Connect**  
**01635 519650**  
[communityconnect@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:communityconnect@westberks.gov.uk)  
[westberks.gov.uk/communityconnect](http://westberks.gov.uk/communityconnect)

# Cows moo-ving onto Bucklebury Common

By Samantha Kerr  
Bucklebury Estate Ranger

IN September, a herd of 10 native, non-breeding Belted Galloway heifers will come to Bucklebury Common to carry out vital conservation grazing across the diverse habitats.

The difficulty in fencing the Common meant grazing stopped more than 100 years ago but now the Bucklebury Estate will use Nofence collars, a GPS-based system to contain the cattle.

Each cow will be fitted with a small electronic collar and with the accompanying app the Estate will be able to define a grazing boundary which can easily be changed when required. The cows will be trained to recognise and respond to a sound when they approach the boundary. If they continue to move forward, then they are given a small shock, like that from a traditional electric fence.

The app provides information about each cow's movements across the grazing area, allowing us to understand where they spend their time as well as monitor the battery power, which lasts for about six months. Batteries are also charged by solar power when the cows are out in the open.

Visitors to the Common will be able to scan a QR code on entry to see where the cattle are so they can avoid or seek them out.

Cows are hugely beneficial to conservation sites and will help maintain the existing habitats as well as create more micro-habitats. When a cow eats, it uses its long tongue to wrap around and rip the vegetation, leaving a patchwork across the landscape. They will happily eat a wide range of vegetation, from grasses and rushes all the way to young tree branches, holly leaves and even gorse.

As they move across the Common, their



**Taking stock: A Belted Galloway**

hooves leave depressions in the ground which will create the unique micro-habitats. They will trample bracken and other dominant plant species, breaking up the dense vegetation and giving other species the opportunity to develop.

The required infrastructure will be completed before the cows arrive, with two permanent corrals being built over the summer. This will allow the Estate to effectively care for and manage the cows. The herd will be checked daily to ensure their health and wellbeing while out on the Common.

The Bucklebury Common grazing project is part of the Partnerships for Nature programme, which is led by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NWDNL) and funded by the Government's Species Survival Fund. The fund was developed by Defra and its arm's-length bodies. It is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

## Want to be a livestock looker?

DESPITE the name, and contrary to what you might think, a 'livestock looker' is not a pretty cow!

As Bucklebury Estate Ranger Samantha Kerr explains: 'A livestock looker is essentially another pair of eyes to check the cattle. You will receive basic training from me and will be asked to observe the cattle and report any issues: for example, the herd might seem agitated as a result of being

harassed by dogs or a cow may develop a limp. You will report the outcomes of the checks to me and I'll be able to take action when required. I'll also be carrying out checks but when I'm unable to, more help is beneficial. Regular checks ensure that both the cattle and the public are kept safe.'

For more information or to get involved as a livestock looker, email Sam at [ranger@buckleburystate.com](mailto:ranger@buckleburystate.com)



# Hard work pays off when we see a child's confidence grow

By Andy Higgs  
Headteacher

THE first half of the summer term is always a sprint. It almost always includes at least one four-day week! It makes for a very busy time.

May not only brings 'darling buds' but also statutory assessment for Year 6. These tests are sent away for external marking and are not for the faint-hearted. Every child has to think carefully about every question in every paper.

Throughout the school, children have been working hard to secure the knowledge and skills required in the curriculum. Resilience, stamina and a willingness to work hard are key. This term especially, we can see children beginning to accelerate and close learning gaps. This is testament to the hard work of staff in partnership with families. Of course, it is also driven by each pupil themselves.

Our roots as a Church of England school are long-standing. While our trust deed dates to 1874, we know that the school was established much earlier in the 19th century.

Then and now, scholarship and

academic progress are at the forefront of the school's work. The Bucklebury Way is centred on growing the whole child in every child. This means we seek to nurture young people who are capable, confident and curious, and balanced in mind, body and spirit. Every day, we see our school family forming, growing and deepening relationships within classes and across ages. How we are, our character and the way we do things creates the space for learning and community.

At the start of this school year we welcomed inspectors to school for a graded inspection. Summative snapshots such as Ofsted and Church school SIAMS inspections can be seen as a disruption to the effective day-to-day running of a school. However, much like statutory assessments, they provide the opportunity to shine and do our best. We seek to provide the very best schooldays for every child, every day. Both our SIAMS report from 2023 and the Ofsted report from October 2024 emphasise this.

Our roots are in the mission to

grow the whole child in every child. This is implemented through our broad and balanced curriculum. The impact of our work is seen in the outcomes pupils achieve and the future success of our alumni.

All children have enjoyed time off-site. On every occasion staff were thrilled to hear wonderful feedback from hosting staff and members of the public alike.

Our annual sports week saw every child active every day and saw the full return of our traditional sports day; great fun for children and families with our family picnic lunch.

Upper school cricketers represented us in two competitions. Tennis is also a fixture of the summer term and our Year 5 pupils impressed the coach every week.

The term brings the upper school summer performance of 'Beauty and the Beast'.

On July 12, the summer fete is being run by the Friends of Bucklebury School who shall raise thousands of pounds for our school with your support.

In due course, pupils will

receive the customary annual reports which highlight how the whole child is developing in every child. We write about how each is developing in mind, body and spirit. It is a distinctive feature of our school and one that we seek to continually develop.

At this time of year, one is looking back as well as forward. My thanks to every pupil in Year 6 who leaves us in 2025. Each of you has contributed so much to the life of the school and we know you will all go on to do special things with your lives.

Particular thanks to our school captains this year, Esme and Finley. They have contributed a huge amount this year: in Deer class; around the school; in worship and of course during Church services.

Our service of thanksgiving is on Tuesday, July 22 at All Saints', Upper Bucklebury. It would be wonderful to have an overflowing church. Thank you to everyone who continues to support the school.

Have a restful summer..



Tom Peddie (left) presents wildflower seeds to Sophie Warren and Oliver Shute at Bucklebury Farm Park

IN April Sustainable Bucklebury volunteers distributed Gardening for Wildlife leaflets along with a packet of annual wildflower seeds to homes in the parish.

Two thousand seed packets were filled and these were also given out at Bucklebury Primary School and the Bucklebury Horticultural Society show. We hope that you received some seeds and were able to plant them so that Bucklebury has even more blooms for the pollinators this year with all the benefits that brings. If you have not received an envelope or would like some additional seeds, please contact us as the seeds can still be planted later this year.

We hope the Gardening for Wildlife leaflet encourages you to take, often very simple, steps to encourage pollinators and other wildlife into our gardens. These include leaving areas of the lawn unmown, planting a tree or shrub with berries or fruits for the birds and of course, not using pesticides and insecticides. We would like to thank Bucklebury Farm Park for funding the Gardening for Wildlife project and our local sustainable flower farmer, Marlston Farmgirl, who provided a wonderful range of additional seeds for collection.

We held our recent meeting in The Oaks Room, Memorial Hall on April 29. Nikki Coome, accompanied by Jenny and Eloise, gave a very interesting and informative talk about the issues we have with plastic usage and how Bucklebury could become part of

## BLOOMING LOVELY Sow seeds for the birds and the bees

the Plastic Free Communities movement.

To help reduce single-use plastics, Plastic Free Communities encourage businesses and community groups to reduce their use of plastics. There is also an action plan for individuals.

Would you be interested in becoming our 'Plastic-Free Bucklebury' lead? We need one person to sign up as the lead for the project, but it shouldn't be too demanding



as we would become part of the Thatcham steering group.

The scheme is extremely well structured with all the information and guidance easily available. We need to get a subcommittee organised for this project and they would be involved in signing up businesses and community allies and helping them to

assess how they could reduce their plastics.

Would you like to help run a Bucklebury Repair Cafe? Thatcham and Newbury Repair Cafe have kindly allowed a small group from Sustainable Bucklebury to visit them on Sunday, June 29. We'll use this opportunity to see how they are running their Repair Cafes so successfully so we can set-up using similar processes.

If you would like to be part of this visit and help us start our own local Repair Cafe, please let us know. Please also get in contact if you would be interested in volunteering for our Plastic-Free Bucklebury lead.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 17 when Penny Locke from Hungerford Food Community will be presenting on sustainable food.

For more details, please visit our website or join our Facebook group.

Tom Peddie, Nina Peddie  
Graham Loader

contact@sustainablebucklebury.org.uk

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

## Talks are music to the ladies' ears

IN February, we were given a fascinating insight by Kathy McDonald into her life as a pilot over many years, reflecting the changing attitudes of the airlines and the public to women in the job.

This was followed in March by Helen Hyde speaking about the textiles of the Silk Road in Uzbekistan, again a most interesting talk on a world of which most of us knew little.

Continuing with our varied programme, in April, Jeff Evans returned to give us a most enjoyable talk on 'Pop on the Box' A history of pop music on television from its earliest days and how the wider culture had an impact on what was and was not produced.

### Tuesday Ladies' Club

In May, Chris Owen, a trustee of Berkshire Vision, brought some of the equipment he uses to lead as normal a life as possible as someone who is registered blind. His lively guide dog provided an amusing side show, while Chris held us all in rapt attention as he described his life.

On June 10 we have a guided tour by James Bywater, at St. Crispin's Apple Farm, Chapel Row.

On July 8 we will hold our annual tea party in the Oak Room at 2pm. We don't meet in August but on September 16 at 6.30pm we will be having a meal at the

Cottage Inn. Food orders taken in advance. This 'foodie' theme is followed in October when we have a talk by Catherine Sampson on 18<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian Cookery.

In November the well-known local historian Nick Young will be telling us about 'Newbury Round the World' and our year ends with our Christmas party on December 9.

For our talks we meet in the Oak Room at the Memorial Hall at 7.15pm on the second Tuesday in the month. There is no membership fee, only the charge of £3 per evening to cover costs and new members are always welcome.

Wynne Frankum



# Problem-solving with Play-Doh brings relief from exams

By Vicky Pratt

Unit Leader, 1<sup>st</sup> Bucklebury  
Guides & Rangers

THE Guides and Rangers have jumped into the summer term full of enthusiasm and energy for the warm weather and longer evenings!

After Easter we went for a bluebell walk, from the Memorial Hall in Upper Bucklebury, down Long Grove, and across the fields to Bradley Moore Square. The group loved the opportunity to get outside, see (and smell) the bluebells and catch up with each other. We finished the evening with a couple of cones of chips as the sun went down.

This term is exam season for some of our Rangers, so we have planned each session to hopefully provide a relaxing break from the stress of revision. So far, they have enjoyed a Play-Doh evening, which provided them the opportunity to relax, chat with each other and get creative. They have also enjoyed a mindfulness colouring evening with hot chocolate and an evening making mug cakes!

The Guides have been working on their Stemettes badge this term. This badge is all about women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and learning about different careers. They started by researching someone in a STEM related career and shared this with the group. They then had the challenge of creating a gadget that solved a problem before building a prototype using Play-Doh. The Play-Doh was definitely the highlight of that meeting! We also looked at



The Guides and Rangers on their bluebell walk at the beginning of the summer term

the importance of healthy living, and how good habits were important, whether this is eating fruits and vegetables, exercising daily or practising mindfulness. To complete the badge, they then had to track their healthy habits over the course of a week.

Most recently we have been working on the 'Express Yourself' element of the Guiding programme and learning about different communication techniques. They learnt the alphabet in British Sign Language

and how to sign their names, identified signs and symbols around the Victory Room that communicate without words and looked at the meaning of emojis and how they can be used in messages.

Excitingly this term we have awarded our first Bronze Awards. This is part of the

award scheme Guides can work towards before they move up to Rangers and involves activities at weekly meetings and completing interest badges at home. Some of the Guides (and their families) had great fun over the Easter holidays completing the 'Mocktail' and 'Confectionary' badges!

Preparations for our trip to the Netherlands this summer are in full swing. In March we held a pre-weekend at Thirtover Place, Cold Ash, where the group had the opportunity to get to know each other and the leadership team.

Over the weekend we helped out on site, clearing away leaves and debris that had built up over the winter, played a game all about travelling abroad, made tie-dye T-shirts and had a movie night.

We were also lucky enough to attend the beacon-lighting in Chapel Row to celebrate VE Day80, selling teas and cakes to raise funds towards taking the Guides to the Netherlands this summer.

We had a really lovely evening meeting so many of you and thank you all so much for your support.

We still have places to join us from September for girls ages 10-17. Please email [buckleburyguides@gmail.com](mailto:buckleburyguides@gmail.com) to find out more or arrange a taster evening.

## Having a jolly time with Holly

### Brownies

By Vicky Beesley

AS ever, the 2nd Bradfield Brownies have been busy, visiting the fire station at Theale and enjoying a visit from children's author Holly Webb.

Holly (pictured below) was much loved by the girls, who all brought in books for her to sign. It was a fantastic evening and the girls were incredibly engaged with her.

The girls work towards the Theme Awards and several of them completed the Brownie Gold Award, which is the highest they can attain. We are always very proud of all of our girls and enjoy seeing them achieve their goals.

In March, we visited Legoland in Windsor, where the girls enjoyed



meeting other Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers from the region.

Next term we will have a visit from the West Berkshire Food Bank, as well as doing archery, orienteering and soft axe-throwing.

Quite a few of our older girls have moved on to Guides, which means we have some spaces at Brownies. We would love to see more girls come along — remember you can join Brownies at seven years old.

You might have seen us at the Bradfield May Fayre where we spoke to lots of people — some already in Guiding and some who were very interested. Let's hope we see more girls joining very soon. If your daughter wishes to join, please visit the Girlguiding website.

Girlguiding offers girls a space to belong and have fun. We bring girls together to have incredible adventures, figure out what makes them tick, share laughs and learn about the world around them.



Jane West, Eddie Smith and Debby Reynolds receive awards from vice-chairman Peter Bunnett at the Horticultural Society Spring Show

# The saucy secret of our local gardeners

## Horticultural Society

THE winter evening talks have been well attended this year, and members of Bucklebury & Marlston Horticultural Society have been rewarded with lots of advice to increase the enjoyment obtained from their gardening.

At our first meeting we were bombarded with horticultural knowledge from Ray Broughton and we now have Bucklebury early potatoes growing under barley straw and spotlessly clean secateurs thanks to a certain tomato sauce.

Hopefully our second talk has improved the survival of desirable wildlife in our gardens and the final talk has encouraged us to explore the virtues of Englefield Nursery.

The fine spring weather was too much for some daffodils, which were past their best by show date, but overall the numbers and quality were up on last year. Many visitors admired the exhibits, which had filled the hall, and enjoyed a cream tea, relaxing in and around the Victory Room.

The summer outing this year is, as previous years, a collaboration with Bradfield Gardening Club. The trip is to the RHS Gardens at Wisley on June 24. The outing is fully booked, but members wishing to join the waiting list will need to liaise with Tony Powell (details on the website).

The Summer Show is on Saturday, July 5 in the Victory Room and our Autumn Show is at the same venue on Saturday, September 6. Full details are on the website.

Take a good look around your garden to

see if you can plan to stage a few entries and you can now enter online (address below) or by emailing the society at [hortsocentrics@gmail.com](mailto:hortsocentrics@gmail.com).

Visitors are welcome during the afternoons. Refreshments will be available and there is no charge to see all the wonderful exhibits.

The Century Club is thriving under the guidance of Margaret Grannum. Our socials also contribute to our funds and we are aiming to repeat last year's success. We have formed a sub-committee to plan a good one, which will be held at the Cottage Inn on Saturday, October 4. Tickets available at our Shows or AGM.

New members are always welcome, Debby Reynolds is updating and consolidating our records to include members' email addresses where possible. She is also developing our website to enable members to enjoy our activities.

Bring a friend or neighbour to any of our events and if you feel you have the energy to improve the Society, why not join our small and friendly committee?

Happy gardening.

Derek Matthews 0118 9712587

Tony Powell 0118 9744695

Margaret Grannum 0118 9713944

[Buckleburyandmarlstonhorticulturalsociety.org.uk](http://Buckleburyandmarlstonhorticulturalsociety.org.uk)



Top draw: The Guides' stall at the VE Day beacon-lighting



Reference	Description	BPC Status	WBC Status
24/00701/FUL	<u>Ivinghoe, Stanford Dingley (Adjacent Parish)</u> Demolition of Existing bungalow and replacement with a new dwelling and landscape enhancements. Amendment to single storey only.	Object	Awaiting decision
24/01258/FUL	<u>Westfield Stables, Tylers Lane.</u> Part Retrospective: Conversion of redundant stable to form one dwelling, car parking, landscaping and associated works.	Object	Dismissed on appeal
24/01767/FUL	<u>Spring Cottage, Chapel Row.</u> Retrospective: We would like to be permitted to regularly rent out our existing swimming pool to local swim schools for lessons. The pool and changing room areas are entirely self-contained, with its own entrance and toilet facilities. There is a specified parking area to the side of the house. There are 6 swim schools that would like to use the pool, covering 28 hrs a week spread over 7 days.	No Objection	Approved
24/01964/LBC	<u>Briar Cottage, Byles Green.</u> Replace rear kitchen window with a French window; replace kitchen door and boot room door and replace four single glazed windows in kitchen/utility room with double glazed windows (retrospective for the four single glazed windows in the kitchen and the kitchen door.)	No Objection	Awaiting decision
24/02075/HOUSE & 24/02076/LBC	<u>Fairchilds, Sadgrove Lane.</u> Two storey extension to c20th south wing and minor internal and external alterations.	No Objection	Withdrawn
24/02210/FUL	<u>Ganbridge, Briff Lane.</u> Erection of replacement two-storey dwelling and detached garage following the demolition of an existing bungalow.	Object	Approved
24/02120/FUL	<u>Sewage Treatment Works, Paradise Way.</u> Extension and upgrade of Chapel Row Sewage Treatment Works (STW) onto land to the west of the existing operational STW site with associated fencing and landscaping works.	Support	Awaiting decision
24/02465/HOUSE	<u>Shepherds Heath, Chapel Row.</u> Erection of 1 ½ storey side extension, upward side extension and new front porch; with associated internal and external alterations.	No Objection	Approved
24/02664/FUL	<u>Bucklebury House.</u> Construction of Machinery Store and Estate Office.	No Objection	Approved
24/02471/OUT	<u>Land adjacent to Pine Lodge, Bucklebury Alley (Cold Ash Parish).</u> Outline application for a proposed new single dwelling on a site within the settlement boundary – Matters to be consider: Access	No Comment	Refused
25/00297/FUL	<u>Staff accommodation, Bucklebury Farm Park.</u> Section 73 application to vary the wording of condition 3 (Permitted Use Class) of approved 23/01803/FUL – Change of use of an existing Log Cabin at Bucklebury Farm to allow a flexible use of space for farm workers dwelling, office space, meeting room, workshop and studio – class C3, F(c), F(d) and F(g).	No Objection	Awaiting decision

Reference	Description	BPC Status	WBC Status
25/00271/HOUSE	<u>Kings Copse House, Southend.</u> Log drying store extensions to existing biomass boiler building.	No Objection	Approved
25/00292/HOUSE	<u>Cadby House, Long Grove.</u> 2 storey side extension and garage conversion into habitable space. Side extension to include double garage and rear entry lobby on ground floor and store area above garage.	No Objection	Approved
25/00243/CERTE	<u>Red Hill House, Briff Lane.</u> Continued use of land as garden land.	No Objection	Lawful
25/00444/HOUSE	<u>Westrop Farm House, Westrop Green (Cold Ash Parish).</u> Proposed single storey extension, new front porch, amendments to external treatment and fenestration.	No Objection	Withdrawn
25/00587/HOUSE & 25/00590/LBC	<u>Bucklebury House.</u> Construction of an outdoor swimming pool, pool house and associated works.	No Objection	Approved
25/00577/HOUSE	<u>Byrons Chase, Carbinswood Lane.</u> Extension to outbuilding. The existing outbuilding is gym and swimming pool with small sauna area. The proposed extension will be accommodating new enlarged area for sauna and SPA.	No Objection	Approved
25/00716/HOUSE	<u>Stag Cottage, Zin Zan.</u> Single storey side extension to form entrance lobby with WC and 2 bay car port. Detached single storey garden room/home office.	Object	Approved
25/00702/FUL & 25/00703/LBC	<u>Picton Farm, The Slade.</u> The repair and conversion of existing outbuildings to ancillary residential use. The repair and extension of an existing storage outbuilding following demolition of small existing store. Definition of the residential curtilage associated with Picton Farmhouse.	No Objection	Awaiting decision
25/00770/HOUSE	<u>Iona, Bucklebury.</u> Proposed 2nd storey extension only (on top of the existing ground floor extension).	No Objection	Awaiting decision
25/00824/HOUSE & 25/00825/LBC	<u>Picton Farm, The Slade.</u> The repair and extension of the existing Farmhouse following demolition of modern side and rear extensions. The construction of an upgraded access track and frontage parking area. The installation of drainage, soakaways and treatment plant located to the rear of the farmhouse.	No Objection	Awaiting decision

## Join old friends and meet new ones over a cuppa

Everyone is welcome at the monthly coffee (and cake) mornings at the Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury from **10.30am till noon**  
If you need a lift call Helen on 01635 863581

Thursday, June 26  
Thursday, July 31  
Thursday, August 28  
Thursday, September 25  
Thursday, October 30  
Thursday, November 27



# Black-bin change will help us recycle more

By Chris Read  
Bucklebury Ward Councillor

IT HAS been really positive for me to meet people at the District Councillor surgeries on the third Saturday of every month at All Saints Church (9-11am) and on Bucklebury Common during this fantastic weather.

As I write this, work is taking place at the five gullies at the western end of Bucklebury Common. They are smoothing out the ruts from the necessary winter works, and I am sure the area will green up soon. The Lower Commons have been cleared of stumps and the car parks and information boards look really smart. But if anyone has any concerns, please contact me, especially about Public Rights of Way, which are the responsibility of West Berkshire Council (WBC). Also don't forget to sign up for the Friends of Bucklebury Common volunteer days.

Many of you have met the local police team at their regular 'Have Your Say' events. We have a new Neighbourhood Supervisor for the Bucklebury and Downlands area, Chris Taylor, who has been taking away the concerns of local residents to address.

Many thanks to all those who completed my Council Services Survey. Residents are generally happy with the black-bin service, recycling and Padworth waste-recycling centre but clearly we need to do more on verge cutting, road gully-clearing and potholes/road-surfacing. I have passed your comments and recommendations to the portfolio holders and senior officers.

There is an extra £4million for road resurfacing in the annual budget as part of an ambitious Highways Programme this year. In addition, the Council will:

- Double the money invested in drainage and flood-risk improvements;
- Treble the amount spent on white lining;
- Invest £400k on footpath improvements;
- Determine potholes at a lower depth of 40mm (rather than 50mm) requiring an additional £400k to cover costs;
- Roll out more 20mph zones across the district for communities that have been consulted and asked for this extra traffic control.

Finally, many of you will have seen that the council will be moving to a three-weekly black-bin collection service later in the year. I have detailed this in the formal written monthly reports I present to the parish councils in the ward of Bucklebury. I know this is a change which could potentially cause concern, but the council is here to help.



WBC will be sharing more information and advice in plenty of time, so you'll know what to do and how to access help if you need it.

This change will help us as a community:

- Reach a 60 percent recycling rate by reducing recyclable waste sent to landfill and energy from waste facilities;
- Reduce the waste we create and help to reduce the cost to dispose of it;
- Cut carbon emissions to help fight climate change;
- Free-up resources to help support other essential council services.

West Berkshire offers more black-bin capacity than any other council in Berkshire at 120 litres a week. The new capacity will be 80 litres, the same as Bracknell, and still more than Reading at 70 litres.

Recent analysis of black-bin waste shows that 42 percent of what we throw away could be recycled using other kerbside options already offered, such as the weekly food and fortnightly recycling collections. Ensuring that the right items are recycled correctly will help leave space in the black bins for those things which really can't be reused, repaired or recycled.

If anyone has any concerns please contact me. Also please remember the weekly food caddy service and fortnightly green recycling service will be unchanged and you can ask for as many green recycling boxes and bags as you need.

Please do not forget that if you spot anything which needs addressing — from potholes, to fly-tipping, bins, or even works carried out by a utility company — please visit [westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem](http://westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem) and log the issue, and if need be also raise it with me.

If the issue is an emergency (immediate danger, etc.) please call the 24-hour emergencies line on 01635 55111.

Stay safe everyone!

[chris.read1@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:chris.read1@westberks.gov.uk)  
07714 081 565

## Ridgeway Council plan

An initial proposal has been submitted on behalf of West Berkshire Council and the district councils in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse for the creation of Ridgeway Council, a unitary council that would see the three areas combined.

As part of the shake-up of local councils, the government has indicated all unitary authorities will need to serve around 500,000 residents or more, which will require West Berks, which serves around 170,000 people, to merge with neighbouring councils.

Ridgeway Council forms one half of a two-unitary council proposal for Oxfordshire, with the other half made up from West Oxfordshire, Oxford City and Cherwell. With strong demographic and economic similarities and significant historic ties, West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse councils began discussions to explore the possibility of coming together. They have produced a detailed interim proposal document, which is available on their new website at [ridgewaycouncil.org.uk](http://ridgewaycouncil.org.uk).

At their Executive and Cabinet meetings this week, all three councils agreed to support the submission of the interim proposal. Following the Government's request that Oxfordshire authorities submit interim proposals together, the county council has submitted an outline proposal for the Ridgeway Council and North Oxfordshire Council to the Government alongside two other options being developed in Oxfordshire.

The Government has set a deadline for final submissions for unitary council proposals no later than November 28. In the meantime, the councils will continue to develop the proposals along with a programme of communication and engagement to ensure local voices and community needs are reflected in the proposal and will also continue working positively and collaboratively with the other authorities in Oxfordshire.

If the final proposal is accepted the Government's indicative timeline sets out that the new council could go live in 2028.

Adapted from an article on the West Berkshire Council website

## Dates for your diary 2025

June			
23	Bucklebury Planning Committee	7.00pm	The Victory Room, Bucklebury
26	Community coffee morning	10.30am	Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury
July			
3	Bucklebury Walkers	10/10.30am	The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury
5	Horticultural Society Summer Show	2.00pm	The Victory Room
8	Tuesday Ladies Club – Tea party	2.00pm	The Oak Room, Memorial Hall
14	Bucklebury Parish Council	7.00pm	The Oak Room, Memorial Hall
28	Bucklebury Planning Committee	7.00pm	The Victory Room
31	Community coffee morning	10.30am	Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury
August			
7	Bucklebury Walkers	10.00/10.30am	The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury
11	Bucklebury Parish Council	7.00pm	The Oak Room, Memorial Hall
26	Bucklebury Planning Committee	7.00pm	The Victory Room
28	Community coffee morning	10.30am	Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury
September			
4	Bucklebury Walkers	10.00/10.30am	The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury
6	Horticultural Society Autumn Show	2.00pm	The Victory Room
8	Bucklebury Parish Council	7.00pm	The Oak Room, Memorial Hall
16	Tuesday Ladies Club – meal	6.30pm	The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury
18	Bucklebury History Group	7.30pm	The Victory Room
22	Bucklebury Planning Committee	7.00pm	The Victory Room
25	Community coffee morning	10.30am	Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury
October			
2	Bucklebury Walkers	10.00/10.30am	The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury
4	Common clearing	2.00pm	Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury
4	Horticultural Society Social		The Cottage Inn (tickets in advance)
13	Bucklebury Parish Council	7.00pm	The Oak Room, Memorial Hall
14	Tuesday Ladies Club	7.15pm	The Oak Room, Memorial Hall
27	Bucklebury Planning Committee	7.00pm	The Victory Room
30	Community coffee morning	10.30am	Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury

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Clerk: Helen Pratt, Jasmine Cottage, Byles Green, Upper Bucklebury, Reading. RG7 6SD.  
Telephone: 01635 863581 — email: [clerk@buckleburyparish.org](mailto:clerk@buckleburyparish.org)  
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# King George VI's VJ Day speech

Three months have passed since I asked you to join with me in an act of thanksgiving for the defeat of Germany. We then rejoiced that peace had returned to Europe, but we knew that a strong and relentless enemy still remained to be conquered in Asia. None could then tell how long or how heavy would prove the struggle that still awaited us. Japan has surrendered, so let us join in thanking Almighty God that war has ended throughout the world, and that in every country men may now turn their industry, skill, and science to repairing its frightful devastation and to building prosperity and happiness.

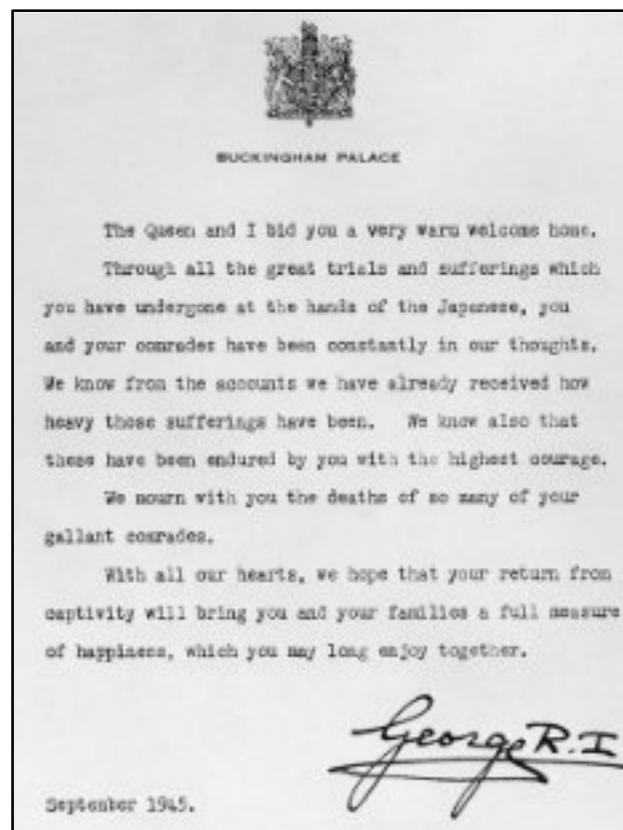
Our sense of deliverance is overpowering, and with it all, we have a right to feel that we have done our duty. I ask you again at this solemn hour to remember all who have laid down their lives, and all who have endured the loss of those they love. Remember, too, the sufferings of those who fell into the hands of the enemy, whether as prisoners of war or because of their homes had been overrun. They have been in our thoughts all through these dark years, and let us pray that one result of the defeat of Japan may be many happy reunions of those who have been long separated from each other.

The campaigns in the Far East will be famous in history for many reasons. There is one feature of them which is a special source of pride to me, and also to you, the citizens of our British Commonwealth and Empire to whom I speak. In those campaigns there have fought, side by side with our allies, representatives of almost every unit in our great community – men from the Old Country, men from the Dominions, from India, and the Colonies. They fought in brotherhood; through their courage and endurance they conquered. To all of them and to the women who shared with them the hardships and dangers of war I send my proud and grateful thanks.

The war is over. You know, I think, that those four words have for the Queen and myself the same significance, simple yet immense, that they have for you. Our hearts are full to overflowing, as are your own. Yet there is not one of us who has experienced this terrible war who does not realise that we shall feel its inevitable consequences long after we have all forgotten our rejoicings of today.

But that relief from past dangers must not blind us to the demands of the future. The British people here at home have added lustre to the true fame of our Islands, and we stand today with our whole Empire in the forefront of the victorious United Nations. Great, therefore, is our responsibility to make sure by the actions of every man and every woman here and throughout the Empire and Commonwealth that the peace gained amid measureless trials and suffering shall not be cast away.

In many anxious times in our long history the



**The letter from King George VI welcoming returning prisoners of war from the Far East**

unconquerable spirit of our peoples has served us well, bringing us to safety out of great peril. Yet I doubt if anything in all that has gone before has matched the enduring courage and the quiet determination which you have shown during these last six years. It is of this unconquerable spirit that I would speak to you tonight. For great as are the deeds that you have done, there must be no falling off from this high endeavour. We have spent freely of all that we had: now we shall have to work hard to restore what has been lost, and to establish peace on the unshakable foundations, not alone of material strength, but also of moral authority. Then, indeed, the curse of war may be lifted from the world, and States and peoples, great and small, may dwell together through long periods of tranquillity in brighter and better days than we ourselves have known.

The world has come to look for certain things, for certain qualities from the peoples of the Commonwealth and Empire. We have our part to play in restoring the shattered fabric of civilisation. It is a proud and difficult part, and if you carry on in the years to come as you have done so splendidly in the war, you and your children can look forward to the future, not with fear, but with high hopes of a surer happiness for all. It is to this great task that I call you now, and I know that I shall not call in vain

In the meantime, from the bottom of my heart I thank my Peoples for all they have done, not only for themselves but for mankind.