

# Woodgreen Community Shop Newsletter

## You are being served!

Who would have thought it? Doesn't time fly?

Your very own shop has now celebrated its 5th Birthday in the new location, and it's a great big vote of thanks to everyone: shareholders, customers, staff, volunteers, suppliers, committee members, and anyone else who has played a part in our story.

It's actually a 10th Birthday too, since it was that long ago when first thoughts on how to save our threatened Shop became hopes and aspirations, followed by lots of inspiration, perspiration and, finally, actuality.

Nearly as much has happened since May 2011 as in the first five tumultuous years of fundraising, planning, building and fitting out. Turnover has almost doubled since leaving the Olde Shop; from £245,000 in April 2011 to £480,000 at April this year, whilst sales of local produce has 'grown' from 20% of our food turnover to nearer 35%. Who could have predicted back then, all of this growth and change?

In the wider retail/village shop world, this success story is often used as an example of what a community can achieve. Ten years back, the sheer determination of the likes of Andrea Finn, Sue Allpress and Merryl Corby galvanised our community into saving the shop and Post Office. The dedication and effort by so many in the community since those early pioneering days has sustained and grown the 'project' into what we all experience and enjoy today: a village community shop we can be proud of.

Accolades continue to come our way. Later this year, the Plunkett Foundation with English Rural Housing Association and Community Action Hampshire has asked us to host an event entitled "Revitalise Rural Communities". This will be a day of workshops and talks as well as tours/visit to our shop. Those involved, from early planning to the present time, will welcome visitors and speak about their experiences on setting up and running a community project.

My, we have come a long way.

As young Mr Grace would say: "You've all done very well" (shows my age!)

*Chairman Ron & the Committee*

## The Managers' bit

SUMMER.....

In years gone by, it was always long, hot sunny days, weather we could rely on. But now it seems if we get some sunshine we must make the most of it in case it goes the next day!!



So, how can the shop help you out on those days out, picnics, BBQs and all the other lovely events throughout the summer? Well, let's see....

**PICNICS:** easy peasy..., pick up some cold meats, trout pate/ sliced, sausage rolls, pork pies, cheese, salad, fresh rolls, cakes and juices. All done! And what's more this is ALL local produce. Even better. Hay Fever? Don't worry, a spoonful of our local honey will cure that!

**CREAM TEAS:** no problem. You could order scones from us, pick up some other delicious cakes, add some clotted cream and local strawberry jam. Sorted! Oh, and don't forget we have a good selection of teas or maybe some Prosecco with your cream tea. They do at the Ritz!

**BBQs:** Chaps, look no further. We have disposable BBQs, lovely burgers and sausages from Hale and Prices for you to cook to perfection or cremate depending on your expertise on the BBQ! Or why not make your own burgers with our local minced steak, add some of Barbara's herbs and hey presto! Add some rustic or brioche rolls, salads; all washed down with some lager or maybe some local beers and of course a glass of Pimms for the ladies?

Staying at home? Great. Come down and have and ice cream. The ever popular New Forest ice cream is always a winner with great flavours but there are also plenty of other choices to suit everyone. If not, then come and enjoy tea and cake, sitting outside and enjoying some "time out" away from busy schedules. Then, to end your day, don't bother cooking: pick up one of our delicious frozen meals that can be ready in minutes. Choose one of our great value wines to go with it and it's all done!

Look forward to seeing you all over the summer, regular customers and hopefully new ones too.

*Julie and Sue*

## Summer Tone!

Write a piece about “Summer Tone”, they said. What on earth’s that about, I thought. I have several friends called Anthony, none of whom would thank you for abbreviating them down to “Tone”. Ant perhaps, but Tone? And as lovely as they all are, I couldn’t manage much more than a sentence on them even if they all stood in a line. And particularly sunny they ain’t.

Did they mean my suntan, which for me seems to arrive after about 10 minutes of the first sunny day in March? Sorry peeps but that’s just the luck of the draw. No, it can’t be that either.

Then Jerry Keller came on the wireless, singing his hit “Here Comes Summer”; one week at number 1 in the 1959 singles chart if you must ask. Or was it our sonorous shop duet “Linda and Jules”, singing to the early morning faithful as they come in to buy their daily rag and fags? That must be it.., at last he has found a connection to the Shop, you say. It’s a relief to me too!

Please don’t blame me if this summer’s weather proves to be a dud. I don’t like to tempt providence by mentioning the “s” word and, in any case, I always blame the Guvinment. What else are they there for?

Well, to get serious, your lovely local shop has a really sunny disposition these days. So sunny we recently had to install some window blinds. The staff couldn’t read the till display and were guessing how much to charge. And those solar panels now working overtime, trying to keep up with all the chillers and freezers, also working flat out to keep our tasty produce fresh and crisp. Not to mention the customers. Are we the only air-conditioned building in the Village?

Living as we do in such a lovely part of England enjoying summer is hardly a chore. Walks through leafy woodland glades, picnics overlooking the Avon, BBQs in the garden, trips to the nearby seaside, the annual “Flower Show”, summer visitors clogging the roundabout at Salisbury college...

In the Shop, we stock just about everything you might need to have a summer to remember. Gone are the logs and kindling, now replaced by locally grown flowers and herbs. Lots of cooling drinks, many also locally brewed and pressed ( see “Sans Vins” elsewhere), tasty ready-made meals to release you from the kitchen and into the outdoors. Pink fizz, pates, cheeses and chutneys for your picnics. Charcoal and firelighters for the barbie. Don’t forget the steaks and sausages. The team have thought of just about everything. And all on your doorstep; free car parking provided.

Who needs the Riviera when you can grab your sunny opportunities here in the Forest. No travel agents or online hassle ... just come down to us and wing it.

*David*

(with apologies to all Anthonys)

## Flavoursome Fish

“Eat your fish up, it’s good for you. It’s good for your brains” ... “But Mum, it’s got bones in it... and skin!”. How many of you have this conversation ringing in your ears from your childhood? Luckily for most of us, we eventually see sense and accept that fish is indeed not only a very healthy option but can taste great too.

Here at the Shop we are happy to be able to stock the delicious fish produced by the “New Forest Smokery and Trout Farm” down the river in Fordingbridge; not many riparian food miles there then, just a short punt up the Avon.

The family-run trout farm produces cold and hot smoked brown and rainbow trout along with the most delicious trout pate known to man.



*There’s something fishy going on here*

Delivered on Thursday, those “in the know” hide where they can pounce and grab what they need. It’s too good to miss and it soon sells out each week. Just as well it freezes well and you can keep some in reserve.

The sliced oak-smoked trout is great with scrambled eggs from Wicks (organic) or Fluffets (free-range). Every bit as good as smoked salmon, and probably a more delicate flavour. Note: you have to scramble the eggs yourself.

The smoked trout also comes as a fillet (no bones!) or whole, both brown and rainbow varieties. Just ask Rick Stein how to cook them. And his Cornish friend Ron knows a wine or two which might suit.

And last, but certainly not least, is that wonderful pate. Team it up with some of our various breads, such as the new range of Bakehouse 24 sourdoughs and ryebread. Trout pate and ryebread is indeed a marriage made in heaven. We have Long Cichel bread too and our own in-house baked loaves and rolls are not to be sniffed at, very good value, and baked fresh daily.

So, there’s no excuse then. Fish it is. An unmissable treat, right under your nose.

*David*

## Our early morning heroes

We are all indebted to two people who open the shop at 6.30am, see to the newspapers and cook the croissants, Danish pastries and bread in store. They are Norman Henstridge and Derek Purse. Here is a little bit about each of them.

Norman has lived in Woodgreen with his wife Wendy since they married in 1967. He was born in Long Eaton, Nottinghamshire and lived there with his grandmother and uncle until coming to Woodgreen at the age of 17 to be with his mother and 10 brothers and sisters. He worked for British Rail for 47 years, starting as a cleaner on steam trains and progressing to driving first steam, and then diesel engines. He then worked as train crew supervisor, moving on to Duty Manager in charge of train crews at Salisbury until his retirement. During this time, he also helped to run the Youth Club in Woodgreen for 4 years.

After retiring, Norman worked for 2 years in the old shop, moving to the new shop, where he is a familiar sight to the early risers. He currently does Saturday, Sunday and Monday mornings and, during the holiday season, when there is a mobile shop at Tom's Field campsite, he has to come in even earlier to cook the volume of pastries that are sold there.

Not only does he work in the shop but he has also belonged to the British Legion since 1971, becoming chairman 5 years ago. He is currently Neighbourhood



*Derek baking the final batch of pastries*

He was a milkman for 20 years in Rockbourne and Damerham, both employed and self-employed for 5 years, so he is well used to early rising. During his working life he has been with the Inland Revenue, Harland and Wolfe, part time at the Alcove for 12 years and Tampen & Tampen until he retired.

He was born and brought up in Brockenhurst and has lived in the New Forest all his life.

Derek has played football for the Fordingbridge Turks, the 5th oldest club in the country, and cricket for the Fordingbridge team. He now belongs to the Fordingbridge Bowling Club and serves on their committee.

He loves working in the shop in spite of the early hours as he enjoys the early morning banter and the variety of customers. He loves his dogs and has had Rottweilers most of his life but he now has a Labradoodle.

Derek said that he likes to be busy as it keeps him mentally alert. He certainly manages to do that.

Both Norman and Derek liaise with each other about the newspapers and I think we all owe them a big thank you for the work they do in the early mornings. They would be difficult to replace.

Sue



*Norman sorts the newspapers at 5am!*

Watch co-ordinator for Woodgreen and works closely with the Hale co-ordinator keeping an eye out for criminal activities. He has also sold Portmeirion pottery at many fetes for charity, but this will be his last year doing this.

As you can see, Norman is a very busy man, always willing to lend a hand.

Derek lives in Fordingbridge with his wife Carole and until recently also worked at the Alcove in Fordingbridge. He now works in the shop on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

## Carrier Bags

Well done everyone for remembering to bring in your own bags to the shop. We are using a lot less of the disposable carrier bags these days.

Great for the environment!

When customers do use a carrier bag from us, we charge 5p. This has totalled £35 so far and this money has been donated to the Woodgreen Village Trust.



## Beer is Best

SUMMER TIME and what better to do on a balmy summer evening but relax after a hard day's work in the garden with a nice cool glass of your favourite beer (or cider if you prefer it.)



And here at your shop we can help by offering our wide range of imbibing fluid to suit your palate.

We really do have a remarkable range, many of which are locally brewed. Ringwood Ales: Ringwood Best, Old Thumper, Forty Niner and Boondoggle; and Hopback and Downton Ales: Summer Lightning, Crop Circle, Typhoon, New Forest Ale, Honey Blonde. Ciders are well represented with New Forest produced in Burley (4 varieties) and more widely known Thatchers Gold, Stowford Press and more.

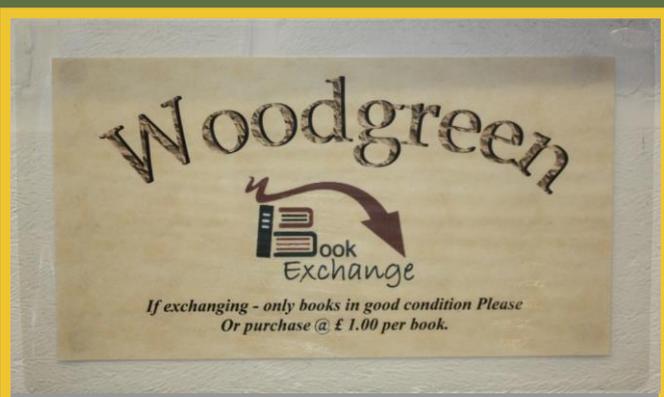
So, next time you visit the shop, please browse the shelves – maybe I have not mentioned your favourite – and buy a couple of bottles to enjoy at home. And remember: BEER IS BEST, BEER HAS STOOD THE TEST!

We even cater for those of you who cannot take beer (are there really people like this?) by stocking various lagers-- now we cannot do fairer than that, can we?

*Reg*

## The Shop Bookcase

Thank you for all your donations of second-hand books and for buying books from our bookcase. We collected £102 and this has been donated to the Woodgreen Village Trust. Well done everyone – keep reading!



## Sans Alcohol

Uncle Ron and his sidekick Reg are rightly proud of their efforts to stock our wine racks and beer and cider cellar with tasty treats at competitive prices, many locally sourced. No, I don't mean from Bookers!

They are always hogging the limelight, and rightly so many of you will think, as you savour the latest crisp white, rounded red, ale from Downton or cider from the Forest.

But what about our non-alcoholic offer.., it's just as wide ranging and tasty. Our juices are a bit of an unsung hero.

Star turns are probably the various apple juices from Hill Farm in the Meon Valley, less than 30 miles away and therefore officially "local". Using their own hand-picked fruit, different apple varieties are pressed separately to retain the fruit's distinctive flavour. Bruised fruit is rejected, if you wouldn't eat it they don't press it. The only additive is vitamin C to stop oxidation. Separate apple juice varieties include English Cox, Ashmead's Kernel, and Discovery. Blends include Bramley and Ginger, Pear and Apple, Cox and Bramley, Apple and Blackcurrant and Cloudy.

Have you tried them? With Summer now here give them a go. I feel an apple juice blind-tasting event in the making? No hangovers guaranteed.

Arguably just as good is the Elderflower Presse from Bottle Green. And the Crabbies Ginger Wine. Don't tell anyone the latter is a bit alcoholic. It's just that it never gets a look-in in the wine and beer column. Shame.

Finally, we have a very wide range of 100% pure fruit juices; orange, apple, pineapple and tomato (refer to Brussels for a ruling?); cordials to dilute, colas, lemonades, spring water and so on, too many to individually list here.

Bottles, cans, tetra packs, all shapes and sizes. The kids will love them, including the grown-up ones too.

*David*

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