

JULY – DECEMBER 2020 • ISSUE 43

# COTSWOLD LION

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

**FREE**  
ONLINE ISSUE



**A New Dawn for Gloucestershire**  
**Things That Go Bump in the Night**  
**Bossing It**  
**50 Years of the Cotswold Way**  
**Surviving the Storm**



# Welcome

## Welcome to issue 43 of the Cotswold Lion – our first online-only edition!

At the time of putting this issue together, the UK was still in partial lockdown in response to the Covid-19 crisis. As an organisation, one of our purposes at the Cotswolds Conservation Board is to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the Cotswolds AONB. And yet, due to coronavirus, we found ourselves initially asking people not to travel to visit the Cotswolds, or to visit beauty spots or explore the landscape. Instead, we encouraged everyone to follow official government advice: stay home, protect the NHS, save lives.

We have been following the advice ourselves: the team members from the Cotswolds Conservation Board are working from home; our amazing army of Voluntary Wardens postponed all their guided walks until further notice, as well as most of their work parties; and our Rural Skills programme was postponed until restrictions were lifted. You'll notice too that the regular events section and guided walk programme are both missing from this online issue of the Lion. Lockdown prompted this decision, but it is only temporary – so please do look out for the guided walk programme to reappear later this summer. As soon as our Wardens can safely start leading guided walks again, they'll be raring to go!

This unusual situation has many facets: in the AONB, we are at once sharply aware of how fortunate many of us are to have gardens, to live in an area as beautiful as

this, to be able to walk from our homes to wild, natural environments. We're aware that not everyone has such immediate access to green spaces. We're aware of how much we want to be able to share these wonderful qualities once lockdown is over, and life begins to return to normal. The Landscapes Review, published by Julian Glover in 2019 said that the countryside is for everyone, and it feels now as though it may mean more than ever to us all when this is over. So: one of the many challenges we will continue to face in the future will be how to connect people with nature, and the many benefits of being outside in the Cotswolds AONB. How can the countryside help people to heal? And can it be mutual – as we find our feet again, can people help nature to recover too?

Whilst working from home, the team members from the Conservation Board are still connected with each other. We're still focused on continuing to do work which helps look after the AONB, and to champion and support our partner organisations in the work they also have continued to do throughout the crisis.

For now, we hope you are all keeping well and weathering the storm. And of course, we look forward to a time when we can all celebrate the countryside once again.

**Alana Hopkins, Editor**

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In this issue of the Cotswold Lion, we're delighted to have spoken to Louise Williams – the new Director of CPRE Gloucestershire; to have Matt Brierley telling us all about autumnal animals to look out for as evenings draw to dusk; to have spoken to Boss Morris – a very

welcome explosion of colour and energy; to have spoken to a couple of Cotswolds community shops to hear how they've responded to coronavirus; and to celebrate this year as the 50th birthday of our beloved Cotswold Way!

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### Support the Cotswolds AONB!

Every donation helps us look after the Cotswolds today, and tomorrow! [Cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)



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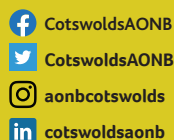


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Established in 2004, the Board manages and looks after the Cotswolds National Landscape, a designated Area of Outstanding National Beauty. The two key purposes of the Board are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB
- increase understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB

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Front cover image:  
Boss Morris  
Photo by: Becky Morris-Knight

# NEWS BULLETIN

## Top stories from the Cotswolds Conservation Board

### All change!

In March, we said a grateful farewell to Liz Eyre as Chairman of the Cotswolds Conservation Board. Liz will be staying as a board member. We welcome Brendan McCarthy as our new Chairman, and Rebecca Charley as our new Vice Chair. Visit [cotswoldsaoib.org.uk](http://cotswoldsaoib.org.uk) to read more about all three on our website.



Brendan McCarthy



Rebecca Charley



Nigel Huddleston, Conservative MP for mid Worcestershire, and Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage, at the Cotswold Way marker stone in Chipping Campden

### 50 years of the Cotswold Way

Before coronavirus, there were exciting plans afoot to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cotswold Way in 2020. Those have now been postponed until further notice. But, the trail is still 50 years old, and we should still mark this! Look out for social media posts and articles in Cotswold Life and the Cotswold Lion which talk about what the Cotswold Way means to us, how we look after it, and what makes it special. And please do share your favourite Cotswold Way experiences and photos with us online with the hashtag [#cotswoldway50](https://twitter.com/cotswoldway50)

### Wonderful Wardens

Our amazing army of voluntary wardens has once again stepped up to the plate. Their guided walks are postponed until further notice, and many of their work parties have needed to be postponed too (the one pictured was before lockdown and shielding began). And yet, they soldier on! One person work parties (can you still call that a party?!) have happened, they are busy planning guided walks for the latter part of the year, and their gardens are all looking bounteous! Plus, @MiketheWarden has been doing some brilliant posts on social media. We are so grateful for everything our wardens do, and can't wait to see them again soon.



Photo courtesy of Dorothy Baker

For more news from the Cotswolds Conservation Board visit [cotswoldsaoib.org.uk](http://cotswoldsaoib.org.uk)

# NEWS BULLETIN

## Top stories from the Cotswolds Conservation Board

### Roots in the ground

A while ago the Woodland Trust gave us 2,000 mixed trees to plant as replacements for the dying ash trees. We're delighted to announce that they have all now been claimed and planted across the Cotswolds. These trees are intended to mitigate the loss of ash trees outside woodlands. They will provide landscape benefits and habitat creation. Our thanks go to all those volunteers who helped us with the planting (no small undertaking), and all those who found a home for each tree across the area. The work was completed at the beginning of March – just in the nick of time.



Scott Brown, of Cotswold Champions

### Cotswold Champions

We're launching a major new programme: Cotswolds Champions. This will showcase how we work in partnership with different people and organisations that share some of our priorities for landscape, nature and people. Over the coming months we'll announce the line-up of supported projects, each of which will receive a share of just over £400k as a contribution towards costs. We already have a number of these in development, but if you're a Cotswolds Champion and you'd like to discuss a potential project, please get in touch.

### Partnerships and Fundraising

We now have a Partnerships and Fundraising Officer! James Webb will be looking after this area of our work, and in particular, the Caring for the Cotswolds grants scheme. This is a way for people to give something back to ensure the environment is taken care of. We use donations to support projects that conserve vital habitats and species, enhance our heritage, and improve access and interpretation. Our grants reach all corners of the Cotswolds and just as diverse are the projects; from saving threatened butterflies to creating a heritage orchard! These projects make a massive difference and help to keep the Cotswolds a special for residents and visitors alike. If you would like more information on the scheme, or would like to support it, please contact James Webb, Partnerships & Fundraising Officer [james.webb@cotswoldsaoib.org.uk](mailto:james.webb@cotswoldsaoib.org.uk)



James Webb



### New! Ourboretum

We're working with BBC Radio Gloucestershire to plant and grow 2,020 trees in the year 2020 – creating a virtual arboretum across Gloucestershire. Whether planting in a pot at home, pots at school, work pots, group pots, club pots, allotment pots, business pots, college pots, let's go potty for trees and fight to replace the dying ash species. Visit [bbc.co.uk/ourboretum](http://bbc.co.uk/ourboretum) for more information.

### Remember!

Lots of the documents we produce, including position statements, planning responses, and funding application documents are on our website at [cotswoldsaoib.org.uk](http://cotswoldsaoib.org.uk).

For more news from the Cotswolds Conservation Board visit [cotswoldsaoib.org.uk](http://cotswoldsaoib.org.uk)

# A NEW DAWN FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE CPRE

Formed in 1926, CPRE – the Campaign to Protect Rural England – is known for carefully scrutinising planning proposals to get the best for the countryside and ensure its sustainable future. Louise Williams, Director of CPRE Gloucestershire, talks to Siân Ellis about how the charity’s exciting new strategies now also embrace wellbeing and making the countryside accessible to everyone.

“Our core business is still our volunteer task force, spread across districts, who appraise planning applications across Gloucestershire,” Louise says. “But we are broadening our reach to other countryside matters too: being more proactive in rural communities; connecting as many people as possible to the countryside; focusing on the emotional health and wellbeing benefits of being in the countryside. They are all inter-related issues, which explains the new strapline: ‘The Countryside Charity.’”

Louise, who became Director of CPRE Gloucestershire in September 2019, worked previously in sectors that tackled violence against women and girls, and before that in engaging with hard-to-reach young people. Her new role is quite a change but, a “country girl” at heart (she grew up around May Hill), she says CPRE “fitted my own values and ethos.” Her professional experience and love of meeting people also suit CPRE’s broadened goals.



Louise Williams

## Communities, connections and climate

“We have active district committees and fantastic volunteers,” Louise says, “and we want to involve even more people in local communities to discuss local planning issues: to add their voices to ours and to make sure housing development is done in the right way and in the right place, close to infrastructure not in the middle of nowhere.”

As to connecting more people to the countryside, firstly it needs to be

established: what are the barriers? For the many people who don’t have cars, simply getting there can be a stopper, as recently highlighted by national CPRE’s ‘Transport Deserts’ report on lack of transport choices in England’s small towns.

“Gloucestershire is named as an area that has dwindling [public] transport services in rural areas so we will be actively campaigning for improved transport links,” Louise says. “It’s about so much more than visiting the countryside for a walk; it’s about young people being able to get to college or access work, helping elderly people get about, and cutting car emissions because of the climate crisis.

“We aren’t a climate crisis organisation but the climate emergency underpins everything we do moving forward, looking at planning, better use of land, tree planting,” Louise adds. “By making even small changes we can all make a difference.”





## Wellbeing and youth engagement

Encouraging access to the countryside so that people can enjoy the wellbeing benefits it can provide is also on CPRE's agenda.

"Research shows that being outdoors greatly reduces stress, anxiety and depression," Louise says. "I have been talking with Inclusion Gloucestershire, a charity that supports adults with disabilities, to find out how we can make the countryside more accessible to people with mental health problems." A series of guided 'mindful walks' is planned.

"Another part of our strategy is to engage more with young people," Louise says, and she has been talking with the Cotswolds Conservation Board about its Rural Skills Programme for Young People. "The programme fits with work we have been involved in already in the Forest of Dean, for young people at risk of being excluded from secondary school to learn

*"It's about so much more than visiting the countryside for a walk; it's about young people being able to get to college or access work, helping elderly people get about, and cutting car emissions because of the climate crisis..."*

rural skills ranging from bush-craft to coppicing at The ReWild Project."

So what does Louise most enjoy about her job? "I am very inspired by our volunteers who work tirelessly to protect our countryside," she replies instantly, adding praise for the "very active" Gloucestershire executive committee chaired by Professor Patricia Broadfoot, CBE. "I also love building partnerships with other organisations, being part of a wider network of different groups that look after our wildlife, our skies, our parks. There is something very energising about being in the countryside and it is very grounding to feel nature continuing its cycle. Everyone should have access to that."

### Further information

For more information on CPRE Gloucestershire – the Countryside Charity, including volunteering opportunities and the chance to nominate local projects for CPRE Gloucestershire Rural Excellence Awards, visit [www.cpreglos.org.uk](http://www.cpreglos.org.uk)



The countryside charity  
Gloucestershire

# THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Since midsummer, Earth's tilt in orbit has been shaving precious minutes off our days. Long nights are coming and – it's official – it's not just *dark* in the Cotswolds, it's *really* dark. Satellite photos have discovered the Cotswold's skies are some of the UK's darkest. In 2019, the Cotswolds Dark Skies Initiative was launched. It's time to embrace things that go bump in the night: Matt Brierley helps us to discover the nocturnal world.

## Spot a shooting star!

Raise eyes to the heavens on October 22nd & 23rd, November 10th & 11th, 17th & 18th or December 14th & 15th and you'll be treated to a spine-tingling **meteor shower**. We may call them shooting stars, but these free fireworks are cosmic debris – often from asteroids – burning up entering our atmosphere.



## Listen for birds!

Many **birds** migrate under starry skies using the heavens as their guide. Falcons struggle to hunt by night. Listen for the *seep seep* call of redwings as they pour in from Scandinavia – marauding migratory Vikings with a taste for British berries. ❖❖❖





Photo by C J Harlow



Photo by David Green

### Watch the ultimate aerial battle!

Until winter bites an evolutionary arms race plays out between two nocturnal foes: **moths and bats**.

Bats – who have good eyesight – navigate and hunt using echolocation since they fly in darkness. They click at objects and listen for bounce-back. Species echolocate at different frequencies; by tuning a bat detector you can tell them apart.

The Cotswolds is home to a very special bat – the Greater Horseshoe. Track them down at Woodchester Mansion near Stroud. By day there's

a bat room with webcams!

Greater horseshoes are crepuscular, active at dawn and dusk. Weighing the same as two £1 coins, they patrol autumn's skies on a 40cm wingspan before hibernating. Named after the shape of their squished noses – which they emit biosonar pulses from – they fly 20+km in a single night.

Moths have found some amazing ways to protect themselves from bats. When the stunning Garden Tiger Moth hears one, it calls back to warn the bat it tastes foul. The Large Yellow Underwing

moth has two pairs of ears; when the first pair hears a bat it takes evasive action; if the second pair hears the bat then that's curtains! Other moths have even more sophisticated weaponry, emitting a high frequency to jam the bat's sonar!

They may be able to escape bats, but moths evolved before electricity and bright lights disorientate them – they just can't understand why they can't fly past this strange new star! Keeping things dark can really help them.

### Find an oily beetle

Rare **rugged oil beetles** have an utterly bizarre life cycle. In summer their babies scale flowers to hitch a free ride on a solitary bee. They then spend months helping themselves to the bee's sugary larder. Now, fattened up, they're out looking for love. They play dead and secrete oil from their joints, hence their oily name. Photographed sightings can be sent to [jgilbert@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:jgilbert@butterfly-conservation.org)



Photo by John Walters

### Find out more...

Want to learn more about moths and bats? Join Jen Gilbert after dark in Rococo Gardens on 11th Sept from 7.30pm or for Moth Madness on 12th Sept from 10.30am. To book email [jgilbert@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:jgilbert@butterfly-conservation.org). Talks available through [mattbrierley.com](http://mattbrierley.com)

Due to coronavirus, please do remember to check with organisers and venues whether events are still running.



# Morris Dancing: Bossing It

You might have seen Morris dancing – but you’ve never seen anything like Boss Morris, the all-female Stroud side that’s putting a 21st century twist on this ancient folk art. Katie Jarvis finds out more.

In blood-red robes, beating a rhythm on wooden sticks held high above their heads, the procession moves over tufts of grass up the giddy heights of Painswick Beacon. Who are they, these strange, beauteous dancers, faces exaggerated and obscured by wide-eyed make-up and headdresses of yellow, pink and purple flowers? The audience feels the allure... alongside a slightly, shiveringly, atavistic alarm.

Once upon a time, Iron Age people might have processed along that same path: up the Cotswold Edge, the Severn Vale stretching beneath them, celebrating a change of season; sacrificing to appease the gods.

But, no. With our dancers, there are clues as to the age we’re in. For one thing, the azure of the sky is crisscrossed by snow-white airplane vapour-trails. For another, these dancers are all women.

These dancers are Boss Morris.

The regulars of Boss Morris are milling round chatting, ready for their Tuesday night practice-session in Stroud.

“It can still stop conversations when you say, ‘Hey, I’m a Morris dancer!’ laughs Josie Wickes, as they prepare to run through one of their latest dances.

“Yes, though I think it depends where you come from in the country,” agrees Rhia Davenport. “If from somewhere where Morris dancing was rife, it can stick with you as something to avoid at all costs!”

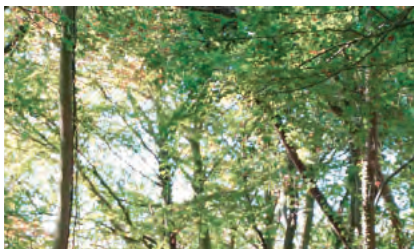
*“A year ago, I thought Morris dancing was for men with beards and big bellies.” But the name Boss Morris says it all: these women are taking control.*

But the 12 women of Boss Morris are changing those perceptions. For a start, many of them are young (they range from 24-60). And even some of them were sceptical converts: “A year ago, I thought Morris dancing was for men with beards and big bellies.” But the name Boss Morris says it all: these women are taking control.

The original line-up got together in 2015 when Alex Merry – an illustrator – moved back to her hometown of Stroud. She’d started to learn Morris in London; back home, her sister Kate sparked the idea of setting up a side locally. A side-with-a-difference.

Lily Cheetham, a local picture-framer, was one of the women attracted by the idea. “I liked the fact that it was going to be all-female, with a bit of a twist on what people perceive Morris dancing to be. I thought I’d give it a go.” Five years later, she’s still dancing.

The twist lies in the fact that these women – many of them working in the arts – make their own delightfully idiosyncratic costumes, do their own make-up, have their





*“It was one of the first times we’d had something other than a white, middle-class audience – great fun to have so many people who hadn’t seen Morris dancing before.”*

own quirky musicians, and their own unique take on traditional Cotswold Morris dances.

“Someone might come up with a new seed of an idea for a headdress, for example,” Josie says. “We’ll talk about it and put it to the panel. We’re all completely different shapes and sizes so we want to make sure everyone’s on board.”

You’ll often see the mystical ‘eye’ symbol incorporated into their designs; but, equally, Stroud is often represented with a crest of River Frome and squares of the red cloth that would be stretched out to dry on the hills around the town. As for dances, they’re mainly traditional Cotswold Morris, “Though we always ‘Bossify’ them!”

They take those dances not only to parties, fetes and festivals, but also to communities that have so far missed out on the delights of folk tradition – such as a street-event in Croydon. “It was one of the first times we’d had something other than a white, middle-class audience – great fun to have so many people who hadn’t seen Morris dancing before.”

No-one quite knows the origins of Morris, which is as old as the hills (or almost). But it first appears in the 15th century as a royal art, performed in courts across Europe by dancers dripping in opulent finery. (“We had a real spangle-y phase ourselves; we’re a bit like magpies!” Rhia jokes). Morris caught on as popular form of entertainment, spreading to smaller

towns and villages, each defining themselves with dances and tunes as unique as the performers’ accents.

Then, in the early 20th century, along came Cecil Sharp, a Morris dance enthusiast who – for the first time – noted dances down in his Morris Book, now a ‘Bible’ for Boss Morris.

o... If they could go back in time to witness a ‘Morris’ moment, what would it be?

“Ooh,” says Rhia. “I’d love to see William Kemp, who’s famous for Morris dancing 100 miles, from London to Norwich, back in 1600.”

“I’ve seen some amazing Kinora silent film footage of really early women Morris dancing,” adds Lily.

“Oh, yes!” agrees Josie. “All in their pinafore dresses, doing exactly the same moves we do!”

“And one of them looks like you, Rhia. It looks exactly as if Rhia was there!”

*For more information, visit [bossmorris.com](http://bossmorris.com)*



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE COTSWOLD WAY!



Stinchcombe Hill \*\*\*



Belas Knap \*\*\*

This May marked the golden 50th anniversary of the Cotswold Way as a named walking trail. Since May 1970, the Cotswold Way has been charming and challenging walkers right along its 102 mile route. It was adopted as a named trail after a campaign by Gloucestershire-area Ramblers and spearheaded by the late Tony Drake and Cyril Trenfield. It became a National Trail in 2004. Running between Chipping Campden and Bath, it is an exhilarating journey along the Cotswold escarpment.

The Cotswold Way presents the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in all its seasonal variety, celebrating its diversity of landscapes, its manmade heritage, epic views, quintessentially English villages and market towns, historic monuments, ancient settlements, and a wealth of wildlife. It is walked, run, or ridden (on bike or horse) by hundreds of thousands of people every year.

Here we celebrate a handful of highlights from the Cotswold Way. Don't forget to share your favourite Cotswold Way experiences with us on social media using #cotswoldway50!

### All hail the history

The Cotswold Way is a walk through British history, featuring historic monuments, forts, settlements, battlefields, and architecture. Highlights include the nuclear bunker at Broadway Tower, the magnificent windows at Selsley Church, Sudeley Castle, Uley Bury hill fort, Stroud's historic mill buildings and canals, Belas Knap long barrow, and many more! ♦♦♦

Tyndale Monument \*\*\*



Chalk Hill Blue butterfly, Cleeve Hill \*





Early Purple orchid \*

### Wonderful wildlife

102 miles of Cotswold Way offers plenty of opportunities to marvel at our wonderful wildlife. From the wildflowers and insects (including orchids and butterflies) at Prestbury Hill nature reserve near Cleve Hill, to the enormous and ancient beech trees at Lineover Woods, to Roman Snails at Dowdeswell Wood, to spotting fallow deer at Dyrham Park, make sure you keep a good look out for wildlife as you walk.

### Enjoy epic views

The Cotswold Way runs along the Cotswold Edge escarpment, and so there are fantastic views all along the route. Once you've reached high points like Broadway Tower, the Tyndale Monument, Cleve Hill, Painswick Beacon, Haresfield Beacon, Coaley Peak, Cam Long Down, and North Common, the views are a real treat. These points along the way look towards the Welsh mountains, the River Severn, the Malvern Hills, the city of Bath, and well into the counties surrounding the Cotswolds.

Uley Bury hill fort \*\*\*

### Cotswold culture

The Cotswold Way starts and ends in Chipping Campden and Bath – ample opportunity for traditional creams teas and the classic Bath bun! Or, for the more adventurous, learn more about Robert Dover's Olimpick Games or the famous annual cheese rolling event at Cooper's Hill. And don't forget to find out about walking festivals, including at Winchcombe, as you march along the way.

Roman snail, Lineover Wood \*



Beech trees \*\*\*

Fallow deer, Dyrham Park \*\*\*



Bath bun at the trail marker in Bath \*\*\*

Note: Please remember that in the wake of coronavirus, we all need to be responsible and respectful when we're in the countryside. At the time of writing, we'd like to encourage everyone to:

- maintain the recommended social distancing guidelines
- follow the Countryside Code (search online if you aren't familiar with this)
- respect local residents
- remembering to take litter home
- remember good hygiene: take hand cleansing gel, wash hands thoroughly, take care around gates and stiles.



Grassland meadows \*

\* Photo by Simon Smith

\*\* Photo by John Mills

\*\*\* Photo courtesy of John Bartram, the Cotswold Way Association, Cotswold Voluntary Wardens



Broadway Tower \*\*

### Support our work

The Cotswold Way is maintained by our Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, and the Cotswold Way Association. Maintaining the trail takes a lot of time, and a lot of money. If you'd like to help support us in this work, we're grateful for all donations. Help us raise £50,000 for the next 50 years of the trail!

**[virginmoneygiving.com/fund/cotswayassoc50](https://virginmoneygiving.com/fund/cotswayassoc50)**

# Surviving the Storm

Community and farm shops have had to adapt quickly to the coronavirus lockdown, social distancing and the initial panic buying. Siân Ellis speaks to two Cotswolds businesses about their experiences and hopes for the future.

## “Improvise, adapt, overcome”

This became Bledington Community Shop and Café’s motto as lockdown happened.

Opened in November 2019, the community enterprise is run by one paid manager and a team of volunteers. In response to the lockdown it temporarily closed its café and reduced shop opening hours (to 9am-2pm daily) as a number of volunteers had to begin self-isolating at home.

Luckily other people in the community, suddenly working at home or furloughed, stepped forward as new volunteers, says Robin McCulloch, joint chair of the management committee. “They are having an interesting experience, meeting new people, enjoying what working in the community actually means, and they are keen to continue.”

Local producers and suppliers, including those who lost restaurant and pub trade, have been flexible in helping to keep shelves stocked despite demand for groceries shooting up. “We have also been able to offer new things including chickens and pastas,” Robin says.



One of the team at Bledington Community Shop and Café

Image courtesy of Bledington Bledington Community Shop and Café

*“I must tell you how pleased I am with our shop... I send an email in with my order in the morning and it arrives in the afternoon beautifully packed in a box.”*

One day when the shop manager phoned in to say she had to self-isolate, the shop instantly closed for a (precautionary) deep clean. After quick thinking, the morning’s deliveries were set up on picnic tables outside. “It was a bit stressful but it worked and we took £500 of business that day, it was fab,” Robin says.

When the shop then introduced a local delivery service, orders poured in. “It became an absolute lifeline for some,” Robin says. One customer, in her 90s, responded, “I must tell

you how pleased I am with our shop... I send an email in with my order in the morning and it arrives in the afternoon beautifully packed in a box.”

Robin hopes that customers who have turned away from the hurly-burly of supermarkets might continue to do so. “They see we have fresh veg, and wonderful locally produced foods, and they are saying they are going to change the way they shop in future.” ❖❖❖

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



Image courtesy of Bledington Bledington Community Shop and Café

## Jolly Nice

Founded by farmers Rebecca and Simon Wilson in 2013, award-winning Jolly Nice Farm Shop and Café at Frampton Mansell champions local suppliers, rare breed livestock, and sustainable food production. It temporarily closed its Coffee Counter and Service Kitchen but kept open its Farmshop and Butchery.

“We had to adapt the business overnight,” says daughter Jemima. “We’re small and nimble but it has been very pressurised, especially as two important members of staff, including our managing director, my mum Rebecca, have been shielding at home. Luckily, many university students who work with us in the holidays have come back early and have been helping.”

An “amazing network of local producers” – Woefulane Organic Dairy, Manor Farm Eggs and many more – have worked all hours to meet the shop’s upsurge in demand, caused initially by customers’ ‘panic buying’. The Farmshop’s new contactless collections and deliveries to older and vulnerable local people attracted 500 orders within days.

“It has been a steep learning curve to manage everything,” Jemima says, adding that when dealing with customers by phone, staff have tried to “simulate the community but from afar” through friendly conversations with older people who are missing their normal visits to the Jolly Nice café.

Staff in the Service Kitchen have been re-deployed to make new ready meals, from quiche lorraine to beef stroganoff and shepherd’s pie.



Head Butcher, Louis, at work

*“It has been a steep learning curve to manage everything,” Jemima says, adding that when dealing with customers by phone, staff have tried to “simulate the community but from afar”*

“With our butchers using whole animals direct from local farmers, making sausage rolls and burgers in our Service Kitchen was an important way of using up a whole carcass and being as sustainable as possible. The ready meals are a new way to do that,” Jemima says.

A new range of boxes and a Click and Collect platform are being developed, and Jemima says, “I think customers now appreciate even more our local produce and supply chains, and sustainable farming that looks after the landscape.”

As Covid-19 lockdown has progressed and developed, so have our local businesses. Before you travel or visit, please do contact individual community and farm shops, and other local businesses, to find out more about what changes they have made to accommodate the official guidance.

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



Rebecca Wilson (Owner & Managing Director) with recent Rural Business Award

# A note about our supporters

Due to Covid-19, many of the attractions, businesses and organisations who normally support us through advertising have been closed and unable to advertise. The situation has been very difficult on our local tourism trade. We want to support them by encouraging our readers to keep looking out for the re-opening of the tourism industry across the Cotswolds – and most importantly, to respond to that in the most responsible way. Please remember to follow official government advice; check details before you travel; support local businesses (and check what their individual adaptations to coronavirus have been); and please do be as understanding as possible as we all find our feet and adjust to life after covid-19.



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

## Combe Mill

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



[www.cotswoldsdistillery.com](http://www.cotswoldsdistillery.com)



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