

AUTUMN 2025

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NEWSLETTER

Datchet Village Society

***Above**: DVS visit to Eton College*

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Welcome to the autumn edition of your DVS newsletter

It's been quite a busy summer! We've been delighted to catch up with so many members over the past few months. We organised a visit to Eton College; presented a display about "Datchet Through the Decades" at the fete; and took along some of the oldest photographs of the village to St Mary's Table-Top Sale. We also saw Datchet's first blue plaque installed; provided historical information for the Parish Council's new notice boards at the cemetery; and came across some more early paintings of the village. You'll find information inside about all this, and more, along with details of our visit to the Theatre Royal Windsor on 10 November.

There are also articles about a local inventor and vintage car enthusiast who caused a stir when he had 70 tons of antique stones delivered to his garage forecourt; and the local developer who built a hall for Datchet Women's Institute 70 years ago. Plus, there's an update on our WWII research and possible names missing from the memorial. As in previous years over Remembrance Weekend, we'll be putting up discreet notices next to WWI and WWII servicemen's graves at Ditton Road cemetery, explaining more about their lives and experience of war.

We hope you enjoy your newsletter and thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you very soon.

Your DVS Committee

Email: info@datchetvillagesociety.org.uk

www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk





If you're unable to join us for the tour, there's a brief run-down of the Theatre's history on the Theatre Royal Windsor's website



Above, the Dining Hall



HISTORY TOUR OF THE THEATRE ROYAL WINDSOR, 10 NOVEMBER, MIDDAY

We have arranged a history tour of the Theatre Royal Windsor exclusively for DVS members on Monday 10 November. Our tour will take us behind the scenes to learn more about its 200-year heritage, the stars who have appeared on stage, and to see up close how theatre is made in the modern day. (Please note, the tour involves a lot of stairs and some of the areas are at height so, unfortunately, it may not be suitable for everyone.)
Full details were recently emailed to members and are also here on our website. We are limited to a group of 20 people at a reduced price of £10 each. Please email Marjorie, marjorieclasper@gmail.com, or call 01753 545110, before 31 October if you'd like to join us.

RECENT VISITS: ETON COLLEGE

In August, Marjorie arranged a private heritage tour of Eton College for DVS members. This walking tour covered a general history of the College and some of the main private spaces across the Foundation Buildings.
We started at Brewhouse Gate, and our visit included School Yard; Lower School and the oldest classroom still in use, dating from the 15th century; College Chapel; Upper School; College Hall; the Dining Hall, which is rarely viewed by the public; and the Museum of Eton Life. For more photos, please see the Gallery section of the DVS website.
The college also invited DVS members to *A Woman's View: Nora Davison's Watercolours of Eton: Curator's Talk & Walking Tour,* an exhibition and evening event in September. Nora Davison (1855–1950) specialised in painting marine scenes before taking up residence above the old Post Office on Eton High Street in 1913. There, she embarked on a new phase of her career, painting views of the streets and buildings of Eton College. She was often seen in the town, sitting on her stool while she painted, with a group of schoolboys looking on.

RECENT EVENTS

DATCHET THROUGH THE DECADES

Before the wind destroyed our gazebo, we were able to display a historical progression of maps showing how Datchet developed.





DATCHET FETE, CHURCHMEAD SCHOOL, 5 JULY 2025

Many thanks to everyone who came to see us at Datchet Fete this year. The theme was "Datchet Through the Decades" so we took the opportunity to display a historical progression of maps of Datchet from 1761 to 1987, illustrating how the village has developed.

It was a very windy day, and we were given a spot in the middle of the school playing fields, with no trees for shelter as in previous years, so we had to tie down the displays. Unfortunately, the weather got the better of us, and we had to leave slightly early when the gusts finally destroyed our gazebo!

WINDSOR CASTLE HISTORY WEEKENDS

If you visited Windsor Castle in August for their "Windsor at War" weekend, you may have seen Bret and Karen Wiles of 'Doing Their Bit', below, who were the speakers at our DVS AGM this year. They were invited to contribute to the Castle's WWII living history display so visitors could learn more about what life was like there during WWII. There was also an opportunity to learn more about the Home Guard and Upper Thames Patrol and take part in Home Guard drills





TABLETOP SALE, ST MARY'S CHURCH, 13 SEPTEMBER 2025

We were delighted to be invited to take part in the Tabletop Sale at St Mary's in September. We took along some of the earliest photographs of Datchet and information about the new blue plaque now installed in Lawn Close. We'd also prepared a display of notable people with Datchet connections and asked visitors whether any of them might also merit a blue plaque. Thank you to everyone who gave us feedback and told us about other famous people who have lived in Datchet.

CHRISTMAS IN DATCHET

Please note, St Nicholas' Fayre at St Mary's Church and Christmas on the Green, with the lighting of the Christmas Tree, will be on 6 December 2025.







BLUE PLAQUE UPDATE

Datchet's first blue plaque has now been installed at the former home of Sergeant Henry William Engleheart VC, at Fairlight, 24 Lawn Close. DVS is grateful to the owners of Fairlight, Jacqueline and Gary Trood — who not only gave permission for the plaque to be displayed on their house, *above and left,* but also decorated the front of their house in readiness — and to Datchet Parish Council which purchased the plaque on behalf of the village and arranged its installation. DPC's clerk invited members of the DVS Committee to see the plaque being installed and we were joined by Windsor historian Derek Hunt and his wife Barbara. Derek has researched the histories of all the recipients of the Victoria Cross in the Windsor area and worked with DVS to secure approval for the plaque from RBWM.

WILD ABOUT DATCHET





On 11 October, a few DVS members joined Wild About Datchet volunteers, local landscape gardener John Padwick, and Datchet Parish Councillor Steevan Glover at the Community Orchard by the Village Hall. (The orchard is a joint project undertaken by Datchet Parish Council and Wild About Datchet, which received initial government funding via RBWM.)

In less than two hours, we had mown "wind rows" across the orchard; sown Yellow Rattle (Rhinanthus minor) along the new rows to suppress the grass and allow a greater variety of wildflowers to flourish; trimmed the taller trees to encourage bushier growth; reduced the height of the wire-mesh tree protectors; cleared and mulched the root areas around the trees and shrubs; and watered everything by filling buckets on ropes from the recreation ground waterway.

Some more work is envisaged for 16 November. If you'd like to join in, be notified of opportunities to volunteer with Wild About Datchet, or would just like to hear progress updates, please email Allen Corcoran at wildaboutdatchet@gmail.com

EARLY PAINTINGS



The Manor House (now Houses) is a timber-framed building which probably dates from the late 1500s. This 1858 drawing of the Manor House, above, from The Annals of Windsor Vol II *by RR Tighe and JE Davis, is scarcely recognisable to us today but it is exactly as the house appears in the painting, right. In the past it was fashionable for exterior timber framing to be concealed by plaster rendering, but in more recent times people have wanted the timbers to be visible. The Manor House's 'Mock Tudor' decorative timbers and patterned roof tiling, which we're more familiar with today, were added a few years later and are shown in the 1870s' photograph, below. The frontage of the Manor Hotel, shown in the photo as a cluster of white buildings, was also rebuilt around this time. The white building on the very far right of the photo was the White Hart pub on the corner of the High Street.*



MORE INFORMATION

On Janet Kennish's Datchet History website, there is more information about the rebuilding of St Mary's Church, the Thames bridges at Datchet and the Sturges family at The Bridge House



1840s' DATCHET

These two lovely images painted by E Bannister turned up recently on the Datchet Eye Facebook group. The one above is dated 1847 and pictures, left to right, the edge of Church Cottage and the milestone, the Manor House, Manor House Cottages obscured by the tree, part of the Manor Hotel, the Royal Stag, and St Mary's Church before it was rebuilt in 1864. The painting below shows the last Datchet Bridge which was built around 1836, half in timber by Buckinghamshire Council and half in iron by Berkshire Council, with a gap in the centre where the two sides didn't quite join. It was taken down in the 1850s when the railway came through the village and the new Victoria and Albert bridges were constructed.

The paintings belong to Peter Faithfull, who has very kindly agreed to let us keep photographs of the paintings in our DVS archive. Peter is a descendant of the Sturges family who lived at The Bridge House in the High Street, the white building which can be seen by the bridge, below. There is a stained glass window, dated 1865, which is dedicated to the family, at the east end of the south aisle in St Mary's Church.



DATCHET CHARACTERS

Right, Frank Jarrett's garages in Datchet photographed during the 1947 floods





GARAGES IN DATCHET

Frank Jarrett owned two garages in Datchet, one on each side of Slough Road at the entrance to The Green. The garage near Mays Green is now recorded as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset in the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan. It is of architectural interest because it is an unusually intact survival of a purpose built garage built in the Art Deco style. Above the central broad entrance is a distinctive mounted octagonal clock (of a type often found on MG dealerships). On the southern forecourt, there used to be a row of petrol pumps.

FRANK JARRETT

From the 1930s until about 1970, you couldn't pass through the village without noticing Frank Jarrett Ltd. Frank owned two garages, one on each side of Slough Road, and was a well-known inventor, engineer and collector. In October 1936, an article in the *Windsor, Slough and Eton Express* had claimed that a gentleman in Taplow owned the oldest car in Buckinghamshire, a 1902 Oldsmobile. Frank begged to differ. He wrote to the editor saying, "Upon looking around my 'stable', I can pick out the following: 1898 5hp Decauville; 1899 3hp De Dion Bouton; 1900 8hp Orient Express, and 1901 7hp Durkopp!" But his cars weren't just collector's items. In 1936, Frank and his brother Boaz had taken two of them for a spin in the London to Brighton run. Frank was in the Durkopp and Boaz in the Orient Express which, it transpired, Frank had found in a very poor condition in a rubbish dump only six weeks previously.

One of Frank's inventions gave birth to a new manufacturing company in Slough. In 1944, the *Express* wrote an article about his patented Jarrett Cam-Cone cowling fastener which had revolutionised a small but highly important branch of aircraft design and was being fitted to new types of aircraft. Frank explained, "It is just a useful gadget doing a very useful job. It's a safety cowling fastener which cannot be overloaded. Many aircraft accidents have been caused by fastener springs breaking under abnormal strains. Mine cannot be overloaded because under any excess pressure it locks solidly on a cam cone so that the yield point of the spring is never passed. We are making them of a very light alloy and a larger type of steel while others, fitted to aircraft and tank radio gear are made of Bakelite. Thousands are used in each machine and they are being fitted to a new type of flying boat but I cannot tell you more about that for security reasons…". The three directors of Jarrett Cam-Cone Fasteners Ltd were Frank Jarrett, Grahame Ross from Slough, and Wyndham Hewitt, a former director of Lagonda Ltd in Staines.

In December 1945, Frank was again in the news. Visitors to Datchet had been curious about a remarkable collection of antique stone coffins, stoops and saddles, millstones and cider presses which had appeared outside his garage. Frank explained that he had been on his way over Bodmin Moor at dusk on VJ Day and had seen the stones, which had been converted into garden furniture and rockery ornaments, outside a cottage. He stopped to see if he could buy two stone mushrooms to flank his garden gates. The owner, an elderly Cornish craftsman was looking for a buyer so Frank took a chance and bought the lot, all seven lorry-loads! He said he'd made the purchase in a "mood of VJ Day madness" but they had proved a shrewd investment as people from as far afield as Southampton had come to Datchet to buy some of the 70-ton collection!

(With thanks to Windsor historian Derek Hunt for research material for this piece.)



Above, one of Frank's adverts from The Motor Show at Olympia in October 1936

DATCHET CEMETERY



FRIENDS OF DATCHET CEMETERY

There have been lots of improvements at the Cemetery recently. Caroline Wise, the parish councillor who now looks after it, has asked if anyone has a vacuum cleaner they could donate? If so, it could be put to good use in cleaning up the Chapel. Caroline has also asked for residents' thoughts about setting up a Friends of Datchet Cemetery group. Please email Cllr.cwise@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk



There will be information notices beside servicemen's graves at the cemetery from 7-12 November 2025







NEW DVS NOTICES AT DATCHET CEMETERY

Datchet Village Society has been invited by the parish council to post information about the Ditton Road Cemetery, Chapel and memorials on the new noticeboard there, *left*. We've started with a short article about the history of the cemetery, explaining that it is due to the generosity of two local ladies that Datchet has its cemetery and chapel.

By 1893, there were only 30 burial plots left in the churchyard so, in 1894, the Duchess of Buccleuch, who lived at Ditton Park, donated a plot of land for a new cemetery. (Her family were Lords of the Manor of Datchet.)

Mrs Mary Ann Crake of The Lawn on Horton Road, paid for the Chapel. She was one the well-to-do ladies in Datchet who, at the time, were reflecting their social standing with generous donations to the village. (She also donated the Jubilee Cross in 1897.) The Parish Church Authorities were originally charged with organising the plans but, in 1896, a new Civil Parish Council took over responsibility. In May 1896, the Chapel was completed, and it was in use until the 1950s.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

From 7-12 November, DVS will be placing temporary notices beside the WWI and WWII servicemen's graves and memorials in Datchet Cemetery, explaining more about each soldier's life and experience of war. Please see the DVS website for additional information. There are also details on our website about the WWI servicemen remembered on the War Memorial, including the 11 men whose names were added in 2018 as a result of DVS research. A heritage trail map showing where the WWI soldiers lived can be downloaded, too, and you can also find details of WWII servicemen commemorated on the memorial.

WWII SERVICEMEN MISSING FROM THE MEMORIAL?

We are investigating whether the names of any WWII servicemen might be missing from the memorial. One omission appears to be Charles William Elliott who was in the Royal Fusiliers. He lived at 2 West View Cottages, Horton Road, and was invalided out of the army after the battle of Dunkirk. He died as a result of his injuries in 1942, aged 34. He has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in the Cemetery and his death was reported in the Parish magazine in 1943. One reason for his omission might be that the WWII servicemen's names were not added to the memorial until 1989/90. The project was led by the parish council and funded jointly with RBWM and the British Legion. DPC does not have any records which show how the names were selected but they appear to have been sourced from the WWII War Roll published in the Parish magazine in 1947, and the Book of Remembrance in the Church. Charles Elliott is not included in either of these.



OLD WINDSOR CEMETERY CHAPEL

In September, Marjorie and Alison from the DVS committee visited the former Chapel of Rest in Church Road, Old Windsor. It was built in 1886, around the same time as Datchet's Cemetery Chapel, and was restored in 1994 before becoming the Parish Council Meeting Room in 1995. We were keen to see how it had been adapted for modern use as Datchet's Chapel, which has been used for storage in recent years, is currently being cleared out, with a view to it possibly being used for funerals and remembrance. Unlike Old Windsor's Chapel, Datchet's Chapel is Grade II listed which means there would be many more conditions attached to any alterations. Old Windsor's parish clerk, John Lee, kindly showed us around and pointed out some interesting graves in the cemetery including one of a Russian princess and that of Edward Robinson VC.



70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WI HALL

When Datchet's Women's Institute held a special monthly meeting in October to celebrate the 70th anniversary of their hall, Datchet Village Society was delighted to lend them a photo album from our archive. It belonged to a former postmistress, Miss Dorothy Gollop, and includes photographs of the hall and shops during construction, *above,* as well as press cuttings which indicate there was considerable local opposition to the proposed building work, mainly to the shops.

Plans for the new development had been submitted by a local builder, George Scott, whose wife was in the WI. He was so impressed by their work that he wanted to give them somewhere to meet. In the press cuttings, he is quoted as saying, "The site was used for 100 years as business premises but I am not awfully worried about the shops; it's the hall in which I'm principally interested." Mrs L Weaver, then WI Vice President, told the *Windsor Express* that she thought the scheme was excellent because Datchet needed more shops. "We could do with a fish and chip shop, a hardware shop, and even another grocery", she said.

When Eton Rural District Council refused permission to build, George appealed. Fortunately for the WI, the Government's Housing Minister did not share the council's view that the development would adversely affect the amenities of the area and George was given permission to build. The postmistress, Miss Gollop, *below right,* applied for one of the shops so there could be a post office in the centre of the village. At that time, the post office was at Club Buildings on Slough Road (since replaced by Sopwith Court).



The Hall was opened on 8 October 1955 by Sir Owen Morshead, KCVO, DSO, MC, Royal Librarian at Windsor Castle, and there was an opening night dance in the hall to celebrate.

The Hall has been gifted to Datchet WI for as long as there is a group in Datchet. If the group ceases to exist, ownership will revert to the Scott family.

HERITAGE & FLOOD DEFENCE

FLOOD DEFENCES

The Jubilee River

The Environment Agency (EA) has published details about repairs to the scour hole in the bank at Taplow and its impact on the use of the river. Click here for details There is also an update on the closed footbridges. Click here for details To find out if the Jubilee is being operated, please click here

Funding for flood relief schemes

In the last newsletter, we explained that the government was consulting on proposals to change the funding mechanism for flood relief schemes. A press release has now been issued. Click here for details The government response to the consultation is published here.

Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Measures

The EA's DHEFIM project team recently presented two shortlisted options: Option Purple, a series of flood walls and embankments; and Option Orange, a flood relief channel. In assessing the preferred option, the EA must ensure that it makes best use of public funding and can achieve the long-term goal of sustainably reducing flood risk. They also want to consider fully the proposals in the flood funding reform. Click here for details.

Flood Awareness

Datchet Parish Council has published Flood Awareness information on its website, here. Its updated Community Flood Plan will be available shortly. If you have any questions, please email Cllr Susan Young, cllr.syoung@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk



Jubilee Cross and Jubilee Oak c1900

NEW HERITAGE CONSERVATION GROUP

Datchet Parish Council recently established a Heritage Monuments and Memorials Working Group to oversee, safeguard, and promote the parish's heritage assets, including monuments, memorials, plaques, and other structures of cultural or historical significance. These might include, for example, some of the non-designated heritage assets of local importance nominated by residents which are listed in the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan, including the WWI Crucifix Memorial on London Road, and the Jubilee Cross, *above*.

The purpose of the group is to provide recommendations to the Parish Council to ensure that these assets are appropriately conserved, maintained, and celebrated as part of the village's heritage.

Members of Datchet Village Society's committee and the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Delivery and Monitoring Group (DNP DMG) have been invited to join. Alison Crampin, DVS Chair, has been appointed chair and Marjorie Clasper, DVS Secretary, is also a member. (Both are also on the DNP DMG.) The Parish Councillors on the Group are Susan Young, Caroline Wise and Steevan Glover. Together, the Working Group will:

- Identify and keep an up-to-date record of heritage monuments, memorials, and related assets within the parish.
- Assess the current condition of these assets and highlight maintenance or conservation needs.
- Recommend priorities for repair, restoration, or preservation to Datchet Parish Council.
- Liaise with relevant heritage bodies, local historians, community groups, and other stakeholders.
- Explore funding opportunities, including grants and partnerships, to support heritage projects.
- Raise public awareness of the parish's heritage and encourage community engagement.
- Provide advice to the Parish Council on new proposals for memorials or commemorative projects.

POSTBAG





Top, the cat and rat on the Manor House roof.
Above, George Cleversley outside his building firm at the Old Manor House in the 1890s

A SELECTION FROM OUR INBOX

The DVS is often the first port of call for anyone wanting to find or share information about the history of the village. A steady flow of emails and questions keeps us busy making new discoveries.

THE CAT AND THE RAT ON THE MANOR HOUSE ROOF

We received a message from George Cleversley's great granddaughter in Australia. She had read a post on our website about the cat and rat figures on the Manor House roof. They were put there by her great grandfather, George, a local builder.

Datchet historian, Janet Kennish, discovered that the cat and rat are the last survivors of a whole troop. The chase originally took place on the roofs of Manor Cottages but it's not known how or when they all moved next door. George died in 1946, aged 93, but the figures are probably no older than the 1930s. They are the sort of concrete decorative animals that might still be bought in garden centres. Janet was told that an American visitor phoned the RSPCA one year, worried that a cat was stuck on the roof, and an inspector turned up! Our correspondent was amused by the story. "I have lived in Australia for 55 years", she wrote. "It is good to see they are still there."

NANCY SODEN'S WEDDING PHOTO

We received an email from the granddaughter of another former Datchet resident, Nancy Soden. She has her grandmother's wedding dress and marriage certificate but is searching for a wedding photo as many family photos were sadly lost in a house fire. She told us that Nancy's marriage certificate just said "Eton" as the registration district but the couple lived in Datchet and she wondered if we had anything more in our archives. By chance, we had a photograph of Nancy's sister Clarice's wedding in 1919 which we'd found during our WWI research. Their brothers, Harold and Leslie had both served in the war; Harold was killed and Leslie was wounded. (Leslie was awarded the Military Cross and later became active in Datchet Parish Council. He accompanied Princess Margaret when she attended the official opening of Datchet's recreation grounds in 1951.)

Unfortunately, we didn't have a photograph of Nancy's wedding in our archives but we did check the local newspapers on the Slough History Online website and discovered an article in the *Slough, Eton and Windsor Observer,* from 10 February 1928 which provided more information. Nancy was married at St Mary's Church on Saturday, 4 February 1928. Her groom, Percival Gordon Randall, lived at the Red House, on Slough Road, and Nancy lived at The Hall, since replaced by Hall Court. The article described in detail what the bride, bridesmaids, page and mother of the bride were wearing and reported that more than 200 guests were present at the reception at the Castle Hotel, Windsor. It even gave a description of Nancy's "going away" outfit.

Datchet Village Society

ABOUT THE DVS

In 1995, the Datchet Village Society was formed to help preserve the special character of Datchet and to encourage interest in its history and environment. Our focus is primarily on Datchet but also includes its locality and historical connections. The DVS organises talks, exhibitions, guided walks and visits to places of interest for members and publishes Datchet-related books, leaflets and cards. We're the first port of call for anyone wanting to know more about their family history in Datchet, or about the history of the village generally. The Society also monitors local planning policy, conservation and development issues and has contributed to Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan and the Datchet Design Guide. Regular updates about our work and events are posted on the DVS website. New members are always welcome.

WHAT NEXT?

If you have ideas for events, visits or guest speakers; suggestions for the newsletter; or if there is a visit, walk, or talk that you missed and would like us to repeat, please let us know

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Very many thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership or made a 'top-up' donation. If you would like to continue to receive newsletters and invitations to DVS events, please make sure your membership is up to date. Annual membership runs from 1 April to 31 March the following year. **The fee remains £10 per adult. Junior membership is £1. Donations, too, are always welcome.**

HOW TO PAY:

Bank transfer: Please note, we now bank with Metro Bank
Account Name: Datchet Village Society. Sort Code: 23-05-80.
Account Number: 56817441. Reference: MEMBER and your surname.
By cheque made payable to "Datchet Village Society" and sent to Marjorie Clasper, 3 Riverbank, 9 Southlea Road, Datchet SL3 9BY.
By cash at a DVS stall at local events or at our AGM.
If you have any queries, please call Marjorie on 01753 545110.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEES?

We are extremely grateful for your continued support. Membership fees help to keep the Society going, contributing to the cost of the website and research, insurance and admin, our AGM and other events, and towards unique purchases for the village such as two 1850s paintings of Datchet, a medal given to schoolchildren for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, a WWI memorial plaque, the original artwork for the rose window in the listed Cemetery Chapel, the new pavement plaque to mark the original site of Datchet's milestone, and the unveiling ceremony of Datchet's first Blue Plaque. We are currently investigating what can be done to restore the WWI crucifix memorial on London Road; and have been given permission to clean the soldiers' graves at the cemetery. The funds also allow us to publish cards, leaflets and booklets, and pay for stalls at local events. We couldn't do all this without your support, thank you.

DVS MAIN CONTACTS

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www.datchetvillagesociety.org.uk, **www.datchethistory.org.uk**
Current committee 2025/26: President, Janet Kennish; Chair/Sales and Marketing, Alison Crampin; Secretary and temporary Membership Secretary, Marjorie Clasper; Photography and Archive, Adrian Giddins. Committee Members, Glenda Croft, Lesley Giddins, Sandra Needham. We would like to thank Adrian Needham, who is shortly stepping down as treasurer after many years, and we welcome Angus Cameron who has kindly agreed to take on the role.
If you would like to join the Committee, please get in touch.