

OX COUNTRY

RURAL LIFE WITH COUNTRY STYLE

SPRING 2024

**JULIA SORRELL'S
COTTAGE RENOVATION**

**EQUINE ARTIST
CHLOE BROWN**

**WILDFLOWER MEADOW
MAINTENANCE**

**BOOK EXTRACT:
HEDGELANDS**

Spring into the season

SEASON'S ESSENTIALS | ARTWEEKS EXCLUSIVE | EMMA J SHIPLEY | FESTIVAL ROUND-UP

Welcome

Welcome to the Spring issue of OX Country ...

...I was meeting a friend for an early evening drink in Eynsham a couple of days ago, and I was running late. She messaged to let me know she was out in the beer garden so I could head straight through, and I thought to myself 'we've made it'. We've made it through the darkest days of Winter and despite the fact that I wish I was wearing a vest as the weather is still brisk, Spring has – palpably – sprung in Oxfordshire.



Flower buds are emerging, birds are busy nest-building and I, too, am feeling the urge to get out, and get busy. We've filled the first section with events around the local area, including a Festival round-up; National Trust gardens to visit in this spring; county shows; and an extensive guide to the very best of the Oxfordshire Artweeks in May.

In fact, this edition of OX Country is brimming with talented artists. I was thrilled to learn more about Julia Sorrell and her renovation of a cottage in Shipton under Wychwood. Julia's work has been exhibited at the Royal Academy, The National Gallery and Lambeth Palace and, together with her husband Ian, Julia has worked primarily with recycled and sustainable materials to great, creative effect.

We also meet Chloe Brown, who specialises in equine art and with horseplay in mind (pardon the pun) we are delighted to feature Kirtlington-based retired racehorse, Que Sera, who recently won the Retraining of Racehorses Horse of the Year Award.

Our Season's Essentials is your guide to a stylish spring, and James Gillies returns with expert advice on getting into your wildflower meadows. If your back garden doesn't quite stretch to meadow proportions, how about some ornamental grasses? See Michelle Heather's feature on p110. And, if you are interested in becoming more sustainable outside, we also learn more about FarmEd's Festival of Farm & Food Literature in May.

Finally, we are thrilled to reproduce an extract from Christopher Hart's new book, *Hedgelands* "a wild wander around Britain's greatest habitats".

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WHAT'S ON



14 April

Fritillary Sunday

St Bartholomew's Church in Ducklington celebrates the snake's head fritillary every year when they hold their Fritillary Sunday which this year will be on 14 April from 12 noon. They open the meadow near the Church inviting visitors to walk amongst the beautiful flowers. The Church is open and there are a number of activities including Morris dancing and musical interludes. Visitors will also have the chance to indulge in a delicious cream tea or ploughman's lunch in the village hall before stocking up at the plant stall.

St Bartholomew's Church, Ducklington
ducklingtonchurch.org.uk

4-27 May

Oxfordshire Artweeks 2024

Oxfordshire Artweeks, the UK's oldest and biggest open studios and pop-up exhibition event, returns to Oxfordshire this year for three weeks in May to showcase the art of up to 2000 artists, including more than 200 who are new to the festival for 2024. These range from world-class painters, photographers, ceramicists, jewellers, and sculptors to talented and enthusiastic members of a variety of community groups working in many media.

artweeks.org
Various venues across Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Artweeks

From 4-27 May, the annual Oxfordshire Artweeks festival paints the county with colour, inviting you to visit unexpected nooks and crannies, manors and castles across the county to experience art of all kinds.

With more than 500 exhibition events from Banbury to Blewbury, Burford to Bicester and Turville and Thame you'll find artists, makers and designers of all shapes, sizes and sympathies working with paint, clay, textiles, wood, metal, glass, mosaic, and more. More unusually, you could meet a milliner, follow a furniture-maker's creative process or talk sport with a nominated Olympian Artist for Paris 2024. You could be intrigued by imaginative, experimental and abstract art: discover exhibitions and installations that look at the science of soil, that challenge the perception of Oxford as a bastion of privilege or be wowed by the generative art created through computer coding and a cool robot called Stephen.

Entrance is free, so keep your eyes open for the bright flags and bunting blowing in the breeze around the county: these indicate that artists and makers are opening their doors and welcoming visitors into their studios and collective art spaces to discover the creative talent that lies within.

Pop-up exhibitions are an easy way to discover the hidden talent of a group of artists in a single space, whilst a visit to an artist's workspace can offer a more in-depth insight into an artist's practice. In all, meet the artist, see what they create, ask about their materials and methods, and – if you like – chat about their work and inspiration over a cup of tea. You'll find some remarkable art, some extraordinary people fascinating insights and some excellent cake.

The venues include awe-inspiring ancient barns, artist studios snuggled in ancient landscapes, and manor houses with gorgeous gardens where you can take tea on the lawn beneath the flowering wisteria. We've cherry-picked a selection of thirty of the most extraordinary studios and other interesting venues to get you started.

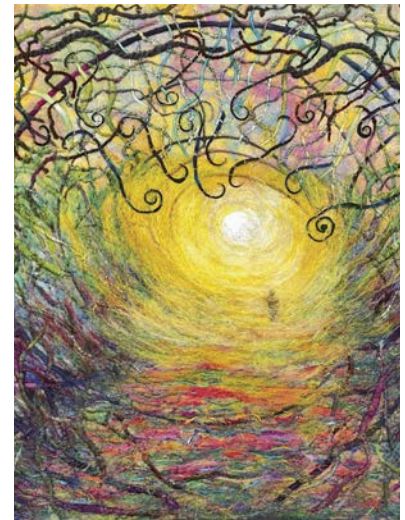
20 EXTRAORDINARY STUDIOS

Aston Tirrold

Exhibiting in a studio with a glorious garden on a four-venue village art trail nestled along the Ridgeway, you'll find one of Oxfordshire's most popular landscape painters, Anna Dillon. Her contemporary depictions of ancient land formations, some of which are inspired by aerial photography (by Hedley Thorne; also on show), tell stories of our heritage, environment and social history. She's also hosting an Artweeks newcomer, Abigail Panzeri with stunning botanical art.

Artweeks listing 448

Heathersage, Aston Street, Aston Tirrold Didcot OX11 9DJ
18-19, 25-27 May, 11am-6pm



Bishopstone

In a garden studio on the Ridgeway National Trail where Oxfordshire and Wiltshire meet, and with a view of ancient strip lynchet land formations, fibre artist Ushma Sargeant creates wall art with dyed fibres that shimmer with colour.

Artweeks listing 505

Ye Olde Forge, Bishopstone near Shrivenham SN6 8PW
18-27 May, 11am-6pm
(Wed/Thu 11am-4pm)

Bampton

Tuula Nicolson is showing a variety of small-scale sculptures in a large gallery-style setting in her self-built home in the centre of the village now widely known as a filming location for Downton Abbey. You'll find another twenty artists in four other Artweeks venues within 250 metres. Tuula is Barbara Hepworth's granddaughter, and Hepworth's influence on her work is clear with its simplicity of shape and holes to allow the light to flow through.

Artweeks listing 108

Wisteria, Church View, Bampton OX18 2NE
4-12 May, 11am-5pm



Charlton-on-Otmoor

At Oddington crossing, in the flat enigmatic landscape of the nature reserve, William North's traditional paintings are inspired by the vast skies over the moor around his studio, and the wide-open landscape of Poland. He invites visitors not only to enjoy the art but to stroll around his large garden, its ponds and lake.

Artweeks listing 3

Oddington Crossing, Charlton-on-Otmoor near Kidlington OX5 2UN
4-12 May, 10am-6pm



Chipping Norton

In a giant industrial-looking art space on the edge of Chipping Norton, you'll find Douglas Tausik Ryder's monumental sculptural pieces in progress. His organic, sensual style is a tension between geometry and nature. Here too, find remarkable fantastical illustrations by Rachel Pease depicting California's ancient Bristlecomb Pine Forest which has trees as old as the pyramids, and colourful thought-provoking art by Tadashi Moriyama.

Artweeks listing 60

1&2 Station Road, Station Yard, Chipping Norton OX75XN
4-5, 11-12 May, 11am-4pm or by appointment.



Horton-cum-Studley

At Old Arngrove Farm, Elizabeth Murphy's studio lies at the edge of the ancient woodland of Bernwood, in a clay-rich area that was a centre for medieval pottery making. It's a heritage she is proud to continue as she creates vessels with narratives woven with threads of history, literature, music, nature and the human condition. For Artweeks she has invited six other ceramicists to join her as the Clay Collective.

Artweeks listing 2

Old Arngrove Farm, Brill Road, Horton-cum-Studley OX33 1DG
4-12 May, 11am-5pm

Iron Down Hill

Iron Down Sculpture Studio near Deddington is a vibrant, diverse creative space shared by a group of sculptors working a variety of materials including clay, wood and metal to create imaginative, inventive and whimsical pieces.

Artweeks listing 15

Iron Down Farm, Iron Down Hill near Deddington OX15 0PJ
4-6, 10-12 May, 11am-4pm



Little Wittenham

Celebrating 20 years of taking part in Oxfordshire Artweeks, Jane Duff is opening her studio and garden gallery in an almost fairytale spot at the foot of the iconic Wittenham Clumps. Wend your way down the short garden path to find two white-washed spaces packed with sketches and semi-abstracted paintings of Oxfordshire. Then, visit Clumps Orchard, a neighbouring house where you'll find three more artists including Artweeks newcomer sculptor Ewan Shearer and hear how his glittering creations in layered glass can be reproduced through 3D printing into bronze, brass or even (look-a-like) bone.

Artweeks listing 435

The White Cottage, Little Wittenham OX14 4RA
18-20, 23-27 May, 11am-6pm



Oxford

Visit Emma Davis' Victorian terrace in East Oxford, and you're in for a big surprise. Her studio is a two-storey wooden building out back with an expanse of six stunning William-Morris-esque stained-glass windows. They infuse the upstairs studio with coloured light. The ground floor is a treasure trove of 70s and 80s memorabilia with everything from Teletubbies and Playmobil to Buzz Lightyear and a four-foot ET.

Artweeks listing 314

14 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BU
11-12, 16-19 May, 11am-6pm
(Thursday & Friday 12pm-8pm)



Oxford

Sculptor Rachel Ducker constructs her trademark pieces of life-size women from wire with flaming flying hair (surely inspired by her own crowning glory) in a tiny Jericho flat-cum-studio where she works in the garden. Packed with Tinkerbell miniatures of her sculptures, and jewellery, displayed amongst intriguing curiosities that would look at home in the Pitt Rivers, it's a truly fascinating spot to visit.

Artweeks listing 234

**7 Shirley Place, Juxon Street,
Oxford OX2 6DN
11-19 May, 11am-6pm**



Oxford

Jeweller Tony Thomson's workshop is tucked below in the basement of Jericho home. It's an Aladdin's cave of fossils, china and silver, small chests of drawers labelled pearls, opals, sea glass, shells and other curiosity, each waiting to become an extraordinary pieces of jewellery.

Artweeks listing 233

**51 Plantation Road,
Oxford OX2 6JE
11-13, 16-19 May, 12pm-6pm**



Oxford

In her airy studio at the bottom of a pretty Jericho garden, glass artist Wendy Newhofer works in glass inspired, amongst other things, by trees and leaves. Using only metal sheets and transparent glass, she uses the natural alchemy of copper and metal foil and wire to transform these elements into elegant wall art and free-standing pieces. Wendy is joined at the venue by jeweller Becky Morgans and artist Kate Hipkiss whose remarkable papercut art is both exquisite and inventive.

Artweeks listing 229

**82 Southmoor Road,
Oxford OX2 6RB
11-12, 15-19 May, 11am-6pm**



Oxford

Edith Road studios is tucked away in the streets of South Oxford's Grandpont neighbourhood, backing onto a small Thames tributary. Once a punt builders' workshop, here you'll find five very different artists are welcoming visitors. See traditional Finnish weaving, elegant contemporary jewellery in silver and coloured golds, seascape photography, textile collage and the contemporary still lifes of Sarah Spackman, a member of the Royal Society of British Artists.

Artweeks listing 260

**Edith Road Workshops,
15 Edith Road, Oxford OX1 4QB
11-12, 18-19 May, 11am-6pm**

Oxford

In Oxford University Parks' Cricket Pavilion, artist Emma Coleman-Jones presents Oxford Trees, showing her field sketches in charcoal and chalk. Whilst we've included Emma in this list under false pretences (because Emma works en plein air in the Parks themselves), it's a stunning venue to visit. Completed in 1881, it was designed by Sir Thomas Jackson who was also responsible for the design of Oxford's Bridge of Sighs.

**The Cricket Pavilion, Oxford
University Parks, Parks Road,
Oxford OX1 3RF
11-12, 18 May, 10am-6pm**



Sibford Ferris

Nicola Durrant's home-based studio, is nestled in the heart of an old village tucked in amongst by rolling hills, a constantly changing landscape in differing lights and seasons. Inspired by those colour palettes and textures in her ethereal layered depictions of the Cotswolds, Nicola has invited a jeweller, a potter and a blacksmith to join her for Artweeks.

Artweeks listing 40

**Shrubbery Cottage, Small House
Lane, Sibford Ferris OX15 5RG
4-12 May, 11am-6pm**





Stanton St John

Catherine Rye's studio is transformed into a 'wonder room' or a cabinet of curiosities for Artweeks. Inspired by her stunning garden and love of gardening, she also invites you to enjoy its colour, the biennials and bulbs in her cutting garden and her new dye garden. Catherine's plants provide the leaves, flowers and seed heads she uses for varied printing techniques, stitched art and more.

Artweeks listing 337

**Hillview, Mill Street,
Stanton St John OX33 1HQ
25-27 May, 12pm-6pm**

Wallingford

Ayres House Studios in the heart of town, are based in a fabulous old Victorian House built c1880 designed by Thomas Jeckyll of the aesthetic movement and retaining many of its original interior features. Fourteen studios are spread over three floors with art disciplines ranging from ceramics and painting to installations, conceptual and process lead art, and art conservation. It's a fascinating space to explore.

Artweeks listing 421

**Ayres House Studios,
Ayres Yard, Station Road,
Wallingford OX10 0JZ
18-20, 23-27 May, 10.30am-4.30pm
(Friday 10.30am-8pm)**



Watlington

We've thrown James Kelso in as a wild card because of his garden shed. "It's tiny. Unmissable. Expect long, long queues," he grins. James' painting is wonderful, and you can watch him at work in a shed situated at one end of Watlington's short High Street where you'll also find dozens of Artweeks venues and art of every type imaginable during the festival.

Artweeks listing 387

**The Royal Oak, 27, Gorwell,
Watlington OX49 5QB
22-27 May, 2pm-6pm**



Witney

At Kingfisher Studios at Crawley Mill on the edge of Witney, Jessica Parker paints richly-textured rolling hills, stone walls, vegetation and flowers, and winding country lanes that evoke the charm and tranquility of the Cotswolds. She is exhibiting with five other artists who will be showing delicate botanical papercuts and more. Next door you'll find textile homewares with contemporary designs.

Artweeks listing 96

**Kingfisher Studios,
Crawley Mill, Dry Lane,
Crawley near Witney OX29 9TJ
4-12 May, 10am-4pm**



Tackley

Taking the traditions of English Slip-decorated earthenware, Bowen's contemporary vessels and unusual sculptural piece are influenced by his father, the acclaimed studio potter Clive Bowen. Dylan works in an old smithy on The Green.

Artweeks listing 133

**The Old Smithy, 12 The Green, Tackley OX5 3AF
4-6, 10-12 May, 11am-6pm**

10 POP-UPS



Broughton

Shire Bramble is a newcomer to Artweeks for 2024. Her paintings, inspired by journeys and their possibilities, caught our eye, as did her venue; a stable adjacent to Broughton Castle, a medieval fortified manor house which is regularly used as a film set. Home to the Fiennes family for nearly 600 years, Prince Rupert was besieged here during the civil war.

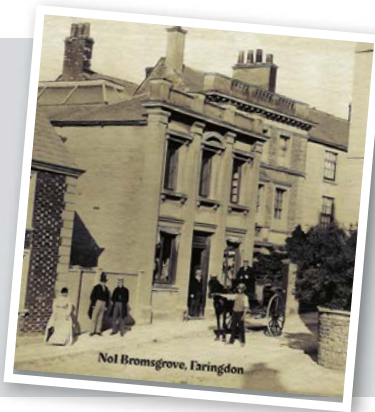
Artweeks listing 38

**The Stable (by the car park), Broughton Castle,
Broughton nr Banbury OX15 5EB**
4-12 May, 10.30am-6pm

Buscot Park

Joining Artweeks for the first time, with afternoon opening times, Lechlade Art Society are presenting a wide range of mostly traditional paintings in a venue set in the gorgeous grounds of this National Trust House, home to Lord Faringdon. Artweeks listing 498

**Buscot Park, Buscot Park Road,
Faringdon SN7 8BU**
4-12 May, 2pm-6pm



Faringdon

In an interesting building that was once a large haberdashery (and still has the original shop fittings), Great British Revivals are hosting an exhibition with art from 30 artists around the region, drawing together local heritage and the art and craft of contemporary artists and makers.

Artweeks listing 497

1 Bromsgrove, Faringdon SN7 7JF
11-27 May, 10.30am - 6pm
(Saturdays and Bank Holiday
Monday 10.30am-5pm,
Sunday 10.30am-4pm)



Great Rollright

The glorious gardens of this spacious Cotswold home will be scattered with contemporary metal sculptures. Tyte Tap Artists offer a wealth of art forms from intricate collaged landscapes and still lifes to photographic impressionism, ceramics with an Asian influence, and modern joinery. You'll get another wonderful selection over at the nearby village hall too.

Artweeks listing 43

**Tyte Tap House, Tyte End, Great
Rollright OX7 5RU**
4-12 May, 11am-5pm



Hinton Waldrist

In this pretty village, at the wisteria-wrapped The Grange, painter Andrew Bloomfield is presenting his recent paintings of Venice, waterways and intriguing doors, portraiture inspired by Old Masters, dogs and still lifes in a barn that's simply breath-taking with its beauty and magnitude.

Artweeks listing 525

**The Barn at The Grange, Hinton
Waldrist SN7 8SA**
18-21 May 11am-6pm



Oxford

The prestigious Rhodes House, University of Oxford is a Grade II-listed Arts & Crafts gem. They will be holding two 'one-day-only' exhibitions. The first is an intergenerational celebration of women in photos and textiles by a Kosova-raised artist Elena Gallina. In the second, artist Nicola Green faces head-on the history of the Rhodes Trust; colonialism, diasporic identity and justice, told through scholars' lived experiences.

Artweeks listing 242

**Rhodes House, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3RG
12 May, 11am-4pm**



Oxford

In The Bodleian Library shops, see paintings by Annie Sloan, CBE. Famous for her Chalk Paint and upcycling furniture, we're eager to see what she's put on her canvases.

Artweeks listing 244

**Bodleian Library Shops, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG
4-27 May, 10am-5pm
(Sundays 11am-4pm)**



Oxford

New College are hosting an exhibition by internationally renowned sculptor Johannes von Stumm. With giant silhouettes on the lawns and smaller logic-defying combos of glass, stone, metal and wood, this promises to be a stunner or a show. (entry fee applies)

Artweeks 247

**New College, New College Lane, Oxford OX1 3BN
4-27 May, 11am-5pm**



Sipton-under-Wychwood

At The Old Prebendal House beside the Evenlode, in a spot that has evidence of human habitation since Saxon times, there's an impressive fifteenth century Tithe Barn which sports a particularly beautiful roof structure. Here the Oxfordshire Craft Guild present ceramics, textiles, jewellery and more in a gallery-style setting.

Artweeks listing 84

**The Old Prebendal House, Station Road, Sipton-under-Wychwood OX7 6BQ
4-12 May, 11am-5pm**

Watlington

Best known for its December indoor forest of Christmas Trees, the stunning house and rolling gardens at the Tree Barn at Christmas Common play host to a dozen artists showcasing their art. With hand-embroidery for Royalty, ceramics, glass and collage too, it's a magnificent microcosm of Artweeks in a single extraordinary spot.

Artweeks listing 389

**The Tree Barn, Christmas Common, Watlington OX49 5H
18-27 May 12pm-6pm
(Thursday & Friday 12pm-7pm)**



For further information on these artists and venues, and hundreds more, visit artweeks.org