

UPTON NEWS

OCTOBER 2005

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Work on the access to the village hall

Thanks to a grant of £5000 from Awards for All the Village Hall Amenities Trust (UVHAT) now has in place the funding needed for alterations to the main entrance of the hall to conform with the new Disabilities Act.

The work involves lowering the threshold with a 1:20 gradient to the approach, replacing doors and framework, infilling above the brickwork, removing the mat-well and making-good to match with the existing floor.

It is hoped that this work can be carried out fairly soon. Hall users will be advised as soon as the date can be fixed.

Harvest Supper

An enjoyable event. Thank you for your support. St. Mary's and the Methodist Church each received £107.87.

Jessie West

Wednesday, 16 November
7pm, Village Hall
Oxford Touring Theatre
Company start their season in

Upton with BEAUTY & THE BEAST

'The impoverished father, the beautiful girl, the dark wood, the enchanted castle, the mysterious host, the blood-red rose, the magic mirror, the broken promise, the happy ending'.

A lovely family show!

Tickets £6 (£4 concessions)
from Jessie West 851206

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

A few things cropped up during September's PC meeting that might be of interest:-

To those who may have been wondering what happened to the proposed **Sheila Parker Memorial Tree Seat**, I am happy to say that you will soon be able to see it set amongst the trees on the recreation ground. Financial restraints prevented it being a circular one but it is hoped that when the Memorial Tree itself is big enough, this new seat will be placed underneath.

The landlord of the **George & Dragon** came to the meeting and reported that his application for a revision to his licence had been successful, taking effect from November. However, he assured us that these extended hours would not mean loud music every night; it is merely to avoid having to apply every time he needs an extension.

All Parish Council **vandalism damage** has been repaired by members of the PC — at big savings to the village, and it was agreed that each and every act of vandalism will always be reported to the police immediately.

Throughout the spring and summer there has been a lot of activity on the **new extension to the burial ground**. Parish Councillors and other volunteers have cleared the site, rotavated, ploughed, seeded and fenced it. It certainly doesn't look like the piece of virgin field of twelve months ago. Go and have a look!

Mr Colin Lamont — our County Councillor — reported that yet another 4000 new houses are proposed for the Didcot area, on top of the 3,200 already agreed on! We are all going to feel the impact of this new development. To be able to present a united front to the powers that be, we are trying to forge closer links with West Hagbourne PC

and had a further meeting with them during the month.

Some items of post: **Thames Valley Crimestoppers** — 0800 555 111 — is a national charity set up to assist the police in solving crime. If you have information about any crime at all phone this number. You will be anonymous and untraceable, so no fear of reprisal, retribution or revenge. Sounds a good idea.

South & Vale Carers Centre offers support to unpaid family and friend Carers. If you need help or advice with benefit forms, acquiring suitable services, or just need to chat with someone who understands your position, please don't hesitate to telephone 01235 510212.

The public are invited to a meeting of the **Harwell-Chilton Campus Local Stakeholder Group** on Monday, 24 October at 2pm at the Harwell Conference Centre, B455 Maxwell Avenue, Harwell-Chilton campus. The agenda will be a presentation by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority of the current draft strategy for decommissioning 20 nuclear sites, including Harwell. Further information from the Secretary, Nick Hance — tel. 01235 436909 or e-mail nick.hance@ukaea.org.uk

UKAEA (Harwell) have sent in a booklet about what to do in an emergency. They point out that in 60 years they have never had a serious accident, but if there were to be one you should go indoors, close all doors and windows, switch off fans, keep pets inside, don't fetch children from school, avoid eating uncovered food, tune to your radio to a local station, avoid using the telephone.

On that cheerful note I will just add that the next Parish Council meeting is on Tuesday, 8 November at 8 pm in the Village Hall. **Yvonne Collins, Parish Clerk**

Blewbury and Upton VPA News

Wednesday, 2nd November is our AGM, 7.30pm Vale Room, with guest speaker Bill Blossom who will be showing us just what the judges at the produce shows are looking for when we put our tomatoes and leeks etc. on the show bench! I am looking forward to this, as Maggie has beaten us all hollow this year, and I need to get into gear for next year's shows! We will be serving cheese and wine as an incentive for you all to turn up.

Please come and find out what we have done over the last year and what is planned. We have a couple of places on the next committee; just a few meetings a

year (maximum 6), but we would love to see new faces who have new ideas! Come and join our informal and relaxed committee. Happy gardening!

Karen Brooks

WINE CLUB

'What a pleasant way to spend an evening and meet people from the village'. This was a comment by several members at the first tasting event of the Upton Wine Appreciation Club (UWAC).

Having paid the incredibly reasonable sum of £2 annual membership and £5 for the event, around 40 members (out of over 60 already joined up) gathered in the Village Hall to taste 8 different wines, 4 whites and 4 reds, each made from a different classic grape varietal. Mike Collins shared

his extensive knowledge and boundless enthusiasm to advise us not only how to taste wine but also to provide fascinating facts about the wines on offer that night. However, one thing he would not do is tell us which wine was "best", as he said the best wine is simply the one you enjoy the most.

With most members walking home, no spittoons were requested and the level of noise generated led the committee to suspect all the wine was being drunk and that the night was a roaring success. This belief was backed up by the feedback given by all the participants. If you haven't joined yet and are interested in enjoying future events then please contact **Fiona Betts** at fiona.betts@btopenworld.com

VILLAGE HISTORY

an occasional series contributed by

Juliet Gardiner

The Railway Navvies

Work started on the Didcot/Newbury stretch of the new railway in 1878, with the arrival of the navvies being recorded by the rector, the Rev Richard Hooper, in his parish diary. The navvies moved from building one railway to the next, some singly, some in family groups. The census for the year 1881 shows that originally they came from all over the British Isles, including several from Wales, though oddly enough none were from Ireland. In all, about 171

people, of whom 110 worked on the railway, moved into this small agricultural community of 241 people. But by this date, quite late in the railway building age, the organisation was in place. Twelve temporary Railway Huts were built down the valley, starting up at the top of the Lynchway, near the present Prospect Farm, and finishing down in the village on Pound Lane at Butler's Farm, which was also a Coffee Tavern for the navvies. The Railway Huts mostly housed a married couple with their family, and several single labourers. Some of the skilled men stayed in cottages in the village, the chief engineer lodged at Prospect House.

What was the impact of this invasion on the villagers? Nowhere in Richard Hooper's diary or anywhere else is there any indication of bad or drunken behaviour. The general impression is of a highly experienced workforce getting down to the massive and dangerous task of creating the railway, including digging the cutting and building the embankment with fairly primitive machinery and sheer physical labour. In all it took them only three years to complete the Upton stretch of the track — by December 1881 the camp had been abandoned and the last of the navvies had moved on.

CHURCH SERVICES IN OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

ST. MARY'S

Sunday 9am

- 23 Parish Eucharist
- 30 Parish Eucharist
- 8 Parish Eucharist
- 13 Parish Eucharist
- 20 Parish Eucharist
- 27 Parish Eucharist

METHODIST

10.30am — Preacher

- Rev. Martin Smithson
- At Blewbury
- Peter Hemmings
- Barbara Sexton
- Malcolm Newton
- Rev. Helen White

Mid-week services in St. Mary's

On **Tuesday** the Daily Office is said at 8.15am and 5.30pm.

On **Thursday** at 11am the Eucharist is celebrated.

Coffee is served after church on the first Sunday in the month

FAREWELL

We are sorry to see Gordon Wilkins move out of the village after 35 years residence in Chilton Road. Gordon who with his wife Elsa, for many years the Parish Clerk, came here from Wantage in 1970. He has returned to live there in an older persons apartment. **M.B.**

50 Club Winners

August £10 Mrs Betts, £7 Mrs McLaughlin, £5 Mrs Gardener, £4 Ms Wright.

September £15 Mr Grimshaw, £15 Mrs Wright, £5 Mrs Parham, £7 Mr Fitchett, £5 Mr Collier, £4 Mr Rippon.

UPTON NEWS is published monthly, the copy deadline being the 25th of the previous month. Please deliver or send items for publication, including letters on village topics, to The Old School, Church Street, either on paper or by e-mail to carol-uptonoxon@zen.co.uk

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