

UPTON NEWS

DECEMBER 2005

Vol.2 No.56

CHRISTMAS DIARY DATES

Saturday 17 December
THE LIGHTS ARE ON !!
BOTH INSIDE AND OUT

Sheila and Vic Dawson welcome you to their home, 2 Fieldside, 4-6pm, for Tea and Cake

In aid of Village Hall funds. There will be a raffle. Prizes to include champagne, wine, Christmas Breakfast and other tempting goodies. If you are unable to come and enjoy this social occasion but would like a chance in the raffle, please contact any of the following to purchase your tickets for you on the day. Sheila Dawson 851205, Jessie West 851206, Clare Lightfoot 850486, Lesley Shaw 850308, Margaret Maytham 850364.

Monday 19 December
UPTON HANDBELL RINGERS

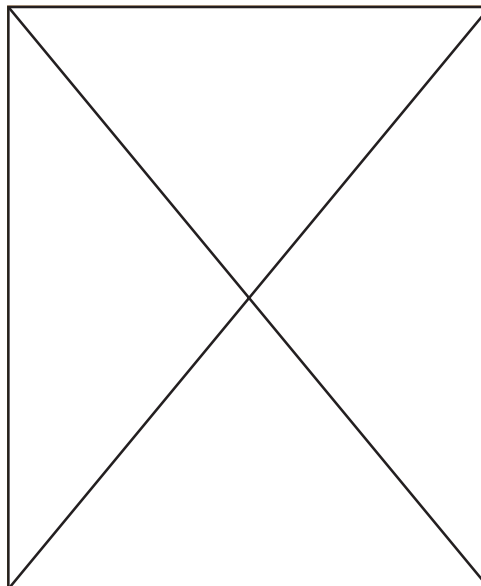
At 8pm in the Village Hall we will be joined by the Border Ringers from Goring and Geoff Summers in a concert of Christmas readings and music.

At the end of the programme there will be an opportunity for anyone who wishes to have a go on the bells. The evening will finish with light refreshments. No charge, but there will be a collection for Sobell House Hospice.

Daphne Simpson

Oxford Travelling Theatre Company and *Beauty and the Beast*. A great production, much enjoyed by the varied age range of the audience. The re-telling of this old tale was well written. The set was brilliant in its simplicity and managed to capture the imagination of both the children and adults.

OTTC's next visit to Upton Village Hall will be on **31 March 2006** with **Dylan Thomas's UNDER MILK WOOD** A date for your diary. Details later.



UPTON POST OFFICE

The Post Office this year is selling a great selection of gift vouchers, eg Woolworths, B&Q, Comet, Mothercare, River Island and more, plus vouchers for theme parks, wine merchants, museums and health and beauty, etc.

The days the PO is closed over Christmas are 26 and 27 December and 2 January. I will be open on Wednesdays and Thursdays as usual and pensions for Mondays can be collected on the Thursday before.

All the Christmas stamps are on sale and I look forward to selling them to you. If people have a problem coming during my opening hours to get any, phone me (850364) and I can arrange to open up.

Last posting dates for Christmas are surface mail to Europe 2 December, airmail to Australia and New Zealand 9th, Japan, USA, Canada 12th, Europe 14th, UK parcels 14th, 2nd class 17th, 1st class 20th.

Happy Christmas and best wishes.

Margaret Maytham, Postmistress

VILLAGE HISTORY — *and pause for thought*
an occasional series contributed by
Juliet Gardiner

TYPHUS IN THE VILLAGE

The year 1846 was a hard one in the countryside. There had been a series of failed harvests which had led to near starvation for the farm workers, and so wretched were their living conditions that inevitably disease broke out. Upton was one of many Berkshire villages which succumbed to typhus fever and it seems that twenty-four people died here. The Methodist minister, who lived in a neighbouring village, visited the sick and dying in their home, but tragically he carried the infection back with him and four of his children died.

The following report is taken from *The Bucks Gazette* of 19 December 1846: '*...the labourers' wages are*

not half sufficient for the support of their families; the potatoes they had partly subsisted on for the last three months were poisonous and infectious; their food was bread alone — and of that not sufficient; meat or other substantial food they never tasted; they could not procure firing, hence their huts were always damp and unhealthy, nor the soap necessary for common cleanliness...'

Looking at this neat village now with its few thatched cottages in pristine order, it is hard to imagine it as it was at that time. There were six large farms, several smallholdings, the pub, the forge, the bakery and shop but otherwise only labourers' tenements and cottages, almost certainly tied to their occupations and frequently in a terrible state. It is well known that Ireland at this time was suffering from severe deprivation, disease and starvation — perhaps we are not so aware that these conditions were also to be found at home.

Parish Council News

Recent letters. 1. The VoWH is encouraging us to put unwanted clothing in our green boxes. However, whilst talking with a friend in the village we both had different ideas as to what happened to this clothing — recycling as rags or as used clothing. I made inquiries and apparently it goes to charity shops.

2. Thames Valley Police have sent a couple of their Safer Streets campaign posters which you may have seen on the notice-board. The clear message of the one aimed at young people out and about at night is: if you're drunk you're an easy target.

3. Oxfordshire County Council would like all residents to be reminded that it is an offence to obstruct a footpath.

PC meeting on 8 November.

The Sheila Parker memorial seat is complete. There will now be discussions as to where it should be put. Eventually it should go underneath the memorial tree, but this is too small at present.

You will recall that the PC issued a questionnaire about where extra housing should be placed (*see right*). This exercise was carried out by Didcot and surrounding villages. The results were sent to OCC with covering letters saying the majority view of the area was that these should be placed near Oxford. Mr Lamont, our County Councillor, reported that despite his best efforts they had ignored all these representations. So, yet more houses are earmarked for Didcot.

Yvonne Collins, Parish Clerk

WHERE SHOULD NEW HOUSING GO?

Here is some background to the recent questionnaire (*see PC news*) about the proposal to build 4000 extra houses in Oxfordshire between 2016-2026. As you know, we are already to have 3,200 houses at the GWP (Great Western Park) before 2016. All the surrounding PCs and Didcot TC feel that enough is enough, not because we don't want the houses — it's that our infrastructure can hardly cope as it is, let alone with 3,200 more houses.

The biggest single problem these days is the transport system. During rush hour, the traffic through villages and on the A34 is sometimes appalling. When GWP goes ahead it will bring at least 4000 more vehicles into the area. Unless there are huge improvements in the roads, our village and many others could come to a standstill. It will be impossible to get to the station, to work, to Oxford... And we now also have the possibility of these extra houses thrust on us. Our countryside will have to be given up for new roads, and/or rail links. The effect on the environment and loss of green belt would be a disaster.

Oxfordshire County Council has about 600 acres of land available for development, some of it brownfield sites in and around Oxford. Surely it makes sense to re-use these areas rather than have thousands more vehicles trying to get up and down the A34 from Didcot. This isn't about 'not in my back yard', it is simply the fact that we are running out of space.

Graham de Wilde
Chair, Upton Parish Council

50 Club Winners

October £10 Helen Watson, £7 Brian Simpson £5 Gloria Smith, £4 Mr Bunston.

Rector's Reflections

Quite a few people have asked me about the current process involving uniting our Benefice of Upton, Blewbury and Hagbourne with the four parishes of the Astons and Moretons. As the C of E is the established church it is hedged around with legalities. First is the appointment of a priest-in-charge, in this instance, me. Every parish has a patron, which may be the diocesan bishop, the Crown, the Lord Chancellor, a college or similar institution or a private person, who has the right of presentation of a clergy person to the freehold of the parish. Once an incumbent is 'instituted' there can be no significant change without their agreement, therefore the first task is to ask the patron to suspend presentation.

Agreement has also to be sought from the Area Dean and Archdeaconry Pastoral Committee. In our case the suspension will be for one year only, to give the diocesan Registrar time to prepare a pastoral measure to put before the Privy Council, as the change must have the agreement of the Queen. Patrons agree to take turns in presenting future incumbents. The new Benefice will have four — the Bishop of Oxford, the Archdeacon of Berkshire, and Magdalene and Hertford Colleges, Oxford. The measure will include the name of the new Benefice and a user-friendly one will have to be found.

A Benefice can have only one incumbent, the office holder a who has ownership of the church buildings and parsonage house. In our case, the parsonage house will be the Rectory at Blewbury and the other parsonage house will be vested in the diocesan buildings committee. The Rector, an Assistant Curate, a 'house for duty priest' providing we can attract a suitable person, and the already very effective Local Ministry Team will staff the new Benefice.

It is often said that small is beautiful but this does not necessarily apply to the Church of today. Although there is an upsurge in vocations to the ordained ministry, there is a dearth of applicants opting for the full-time ministry. Also, the Church simply cannot afford to employ as many full-time clergy as some would like. A healthy Church is one that helps its members to develop the gifts God has given them and enables them to take responsibility for furthering the Kingdom where they are.

Edwin Clements

CHURCH SERVICES IN DECEMBER

ST. MARY'S

Sunday 9am

4 Parish Eucharist

11 Parish Eucharist

18 Parish Eucharist

3pm *24 Carols and Crib Service

25 Christmas Eucharist

*A short service for everyone with mince pies afterwards

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

METHODIST

10.30am — Preacher

Libby Bolton

Derek Morton

Rev. Helen White

At Blewbury

NB On 22 January St. Mary's will join the Methodists in Blewbury for the Covenant Service. No service at St. Mary's.

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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