

Upton News



Vol 4 No.15 December 2012

May we wish you an early Happy Christmas. The spell of cold and frosty weather is making it feel very wintry, wonder if we will have a white Christmas? We will be publishing our next edition at the end of January. Please submit any articles by 20th January.

Thank you to everyone who completed the questionnaire on your views on *Upton News*. We've published a summary of the results on page 6 and will take your comments into consideration. Many thanks for the individual suggestions and offers of help – and in particular to those willing to contribute material! Please send any articles, news, views and opinions for inclusion in future editions to news@uptonvillage.co.uk.

Finally, a big thank you to Brian Rippon who has done a first class job on the layout and look of *Upton News*, to all the generous sponsors for the paper copies and to the team of deliverers.

Sarah

Inside this issue...

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Play Area – Volunteers Wanted

After a few teething issues, the new play area is now fully functional and appears to have gone down a storm with local children. With this fantastic facility however, comes responsibility and the Parish Council now has a duty to ensure it is regularly inspected and maintained to ensure the safety of our children. With this in mind we're seeking volunteers to join an inspection rota. Inspections will be weekly, so it is envisaged that each volunteer will only need to perform an inspection every 2-3 months.

If you would like to join the rota and help ensure our play area remains safe, please contact Bob Lott on 851222.

Submissions for Upton News should be sent to the Editor, Sarah Sayers, at news@uptonvillage.co.uk or to Orchard Lodge, High Street, Upton OX11 9JE. Tel 01235 851450. Deadline for the February edition is 20th January.

Theatre Club

The Upton Theatre Goers went to the Oxford Playhouse in November to see *Rough Justice* with Tom Conti as James Highwood and a small supporting cast. The author is Terence Frisby. Who he? Well he had a career of writing for the cinema and screen and *Rough Justice* is the creation of a master craftsman. It is a courtroom drama, with the clever and occasional insertion of the Courthouse cell where we are privy to the thoughts of James and his wife, and their solicitor.

We were gripped from the start. Tom Conti takes the part of a television journalist who has made a career of challenging the British Justice System. Now it is he who is challenged. He stands in the dock as the result of the death of his youngest child. Aged two years the child is catastrophically handicapped as a result of congenital brain damage. The outlook for his future is grim. James enters a plea of Manslaughter. He describes the evening he placed a pillow over his son's body, and presses down until the child is still.

The battle for the outcome is for a sentence of Life or Leniency. The Judge, the prosecuting Q.C. and Highwood representing himself are the protagonists.

The Judge stresses that the sentence whether Murder or Manslaughter is entirely in the hands of the jury. Then we find that the audience is to be the jury.

It is the last twist of a truly dramatic evening.

Jo Joel

Homeworkers' Christmas Lunch

Are you missing out on the annual office Christmas party because you work from home in Upton?

Don't worry! Anyone who lives and works in the village and would like to meet up for a Christmas meal in the George & Dragon is welcome to join us for lunch on Tuesday 18th December at 1.00pm. We had a great time last year and would love to see as many Uptonians as possible at this event. We will need to confirm numbers and orders in advance, so please contact Paul Batho (tel 851251 or email pbatho@aol.com) by Friday 14th December at the latest.

Paul Batho

Note from the Parish Council

Over the past few weeks it has been drawn to the attention of the Parish Council that overgrown hedges are impeding footpaths: Upper Stream Road and Chapel Furlong to name just two areas. Please can we ask parishioners with unruly hedges to be kind enough to trim them back? Autumn hedgerows are very beautiful but please can you ensure that they are not becoming an obstruction and causing a nuisance to other residents.

Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 15th January at 8.00pm.

Village Carol Singing

All villagers are warmly invited to come carol singing round Upton's streets on Friday 21st December. We will meet at the Village Hall at 6.30pm and finish up there again at around 8pm for a welcome glass of mulled wine, mince pies and more seasonal music performed by the village handbell ringers led by Daphne Simpson. Word sheets will be provided, but please bring torches and lanterns. We will be collecting again for local charity, Didcot TRAIN Youth Project (Registered Charity No 1094601) which gives support to homeless and disaffected young people in Didcot, providing alternative activities to vandalism, drugs and alcohol. If you'd prefer to listen rather than sing, please get your pennies and pounds (but no missiles please!) ready for this excellent local cause. Give me a call or drop me a line if you would like to take part. The more the merrier!

Sarah Tenant-Flowers (Tel: 850488 or email singscape@aol.com)

Blewbury WI

For many of us, Christmas is such a busy time, a time when family and friends get together over the festive season. Our WI is no different, we have several events where we catch up with each other, and take a well earned "time out" from all that rushing about!

Our activities for December are:

Weds 5th Scrabble at Lyn Page's
Fri 7th, RAL lecture on "The Higgs Boson..."

Tues 11th Christmas lunch 12.30pm

Tues 18th Christmas get together
10.30 am, at Chapel Orchard.

For more details, or to join the Mah Jong or Scrabble group, or if you wish to join us, please ring Judy on 850381. Future events are also listed on our "Facebook" page, Blewbury WI.

Karen Brooks

Dates for your diary

Wed 12 Dec	8pm Village Hall
Tue 18 Dec	Upton Homemaker's Christmas Lunch
Tue 18 Dec	Last day for posting 2nd class
Thu 20 Dec	Last day for posting 1st class
Fri 21 Dec	6.30 pm Carol Singing, meet Village Hall
Mon 24 Dec	4pm Children church service St Mary's
Thu 27 Dec	Grey bin collection
Thu 3 Jan	Green bin collection
Wed 9 Jan	Grey bin collection

St Mary's services

Sunday 9 Dec	9.00am	Sung Eucharist
Sunday 16 Dec	9.00am	Sung Eucharist
Sunday 23 Dec	9.00am	Sung Eucharist
CHRISTMAS EVE	4.00pm	CRIB & CAROL SERVICE
CHRISTMAS DAY	9.00am	Sung Eucharist
Sunday 30 Dec	9.00am	Sung Eucharist
Sunday 6 Jan	9.00am	Sung Eucharist

Yuletide Recipes

Honey & Mustard Sausages

- 1lb small chipolata sausages (or a pack of 8, each one chopped into 3)
- Honey
- Wholegrain mustard

In an ovenproof dish, put about a tablespoon of honey on the base of the dish and then add about 2 tsp of wholegrain mustard and mix together.

Add the sausages and ensure they are coated in the honey & mustard.

Cook in the oven at 160o (turn once) until brown.

Drain off the excess fat. Serve with cocktail sticks (beware, can be very hot).

Mulled Wine

Adjust quantities and sweetness according to taste. It is recommended that you forewarn anyone who may be driving about the brandy content as this can get masked by the spices.

- 2 bottles of red wine
- 1 orange (sliced)
- Cloves
- Cinnamon stick
- Dash of brandy
- Sugar (to taste)

Put about 1 oz of sugar in a pan. Add the red wine.

Add the cinnamon stick and the orange slices studded with cloves.

Simmer until warmed through, but do not allow to boil.

Add a slug of brandy (to taste).

Allow the flavours to infuse.

Serve in glasses (put a teaspoon in the glass before pouring in the hot liquid to prevent the glass from cracking).

Rectors Reflections

Christmas in a Word

I wonder, if you had to sum up Christmas in just one word, what word would you choose? Carols? Crackers? Snowmen? Tinsel? There are so many words to choose from!

If you were to ask me for the word I would choose, I think it might well be the word "Surprise". Why might I choose this word?

Surprise was at the heart of the very first Christmas. At the time that Jesus was born, pious Jews knew that God was present with His people, and many felt that He was present in the Temple in Jerusalem. But no one expected God to take human flesh and become a human being. The theme of surprise runs as a thread through the stories surrounding the birth of Jesus, stories familiar to us from the lessons read at carol services, and from the words of countless carols. Much of the later life and teaching of Jesus came as a surprise - to his family, his contemporaries, and even to his closest followers. For many, Jesus came as too much of a surprise! Many found His actions and his teachings far too challenging. And the greatest surprise of all came at the very end of Jesus' life. Most people would doubtless have predicted that Jesus was going to come to a sticky end, because he challenged the assumptions and pretensions of those in authority, both the political elite and the religious authorities. But, in the event, Jesus' execution proved not to be the end, but rather the



beginning- the beginning of Jesus' new life, as the resurrected Lord, claiming power and authority over all creation.

When we encounter Jesus, we meet God at work, constantly surprising us with the depth of His love, and the challenge of His truth. God wants to challenge our assumptions, to open us to new experiences, and to help us grow as human beings. All of God's surprises are the surprises of love, the surprises of someone who wishes only the very best for us. God is not in the business of playing tricks with us. Rather, God is in the business of providing us with new beginnings and new hope.

When times are dark, and hearts are heavy, let us remember the wonderful surprises which God has in store for us, not only over the Christmas period, but in the year and years ahead.

Merry Christmas!

Fr Jason



Upton News Survey

There were 28 responses, and although more would have been better, by MORI standards this should have been a statistically representative sample. However there were disproportionately more responses from electronic subscribers... Of those who answered a given question:

- 93% lived in Upton
- 89% were on email
- 67% receive an electronic copy, 37% a printed copy (some receive both)
- 20% receive a printed copy but would like to receive an electronic copy
- None receive an electronic copy but would like to receive a printed copy
- 89% like the current A5 format
- 59% preferred colour, 11% black and white, 30% didn't mind
- 4% would like to revert to the two page black and white version
- 88% would like to receive it monthly, 12% quarterly
- 4% thought it too short, 85% about right, 11% too long
- 7% thought the content poor, 15% fair, 52% good, 26% excellent
- 44% were willing to submit articles
- 19% were willing to sponsor printing
- 75% would like us to include adverts to pay for the printing, and 23% were prepared to help find advertisers

Village Produce Association

At our AGM in November, we welcomed Vic to the committee, Eileen read her report for the year, Chris presented the Presidents Cup back to me, (what a surprise) and we tried delicious cakes made with surprising ingredients', who would have thought that chocolate and spinach tasted really good together (It did actually!!).

The tickets for our Christmas social event, at Upton Village hall, on Saturday 8th December are on sale for £5 at Blewbury Post Office, supper, mulled wine, fruit juice and entertainment, with lifts provided

for those who require them, please ring me (850219) email me on karencbrooks@gmail.com or see me in the Post Office.

Just a reminder that we have tools to hire, a shredder that is great for small trees, a leaf blower/sucker, the mantis tiller, a garden roller, fertilizer spreader, aerator, pruners, etc, just give me a call, and will pass your details on. I have to say I am not doing much out there at the moment, it is so wet and soggy, but I do still have roses in flower.

Happy Gardening

Karen Brooks

Spring Line Methodist Church

Services for December 2012

There are services at both Centres this month:

	<i>Centre</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Preacher</i>
9th	Upton	10.30 am	Marlene Chalkley
16th	Blewbury	3.00 pm	Rev Richard Bittleston (Carol Service)
23rd	Upton	10.30 am	Rev Richard Bittleston
30th	Upton	10.30 am	Geoff Caudle

Special Services

Nativity Service The St Michaels' Sunday School held their nativity service at Blewbury Chapel on December 2nd. It was lovely to have so many children at the chapel again.

Carol Service: Our Carol Service is at **3.00 pm** on Sunday 16th December at the Blewbury Centre. Members of St. Michael's Church choir are joining us, and there will be coffee and mince pies afterwards. We will be delighted to

welcome anyone in the village who wants to join us for our last Carol Service. Listen to the choir and sing some of your favourite carols.

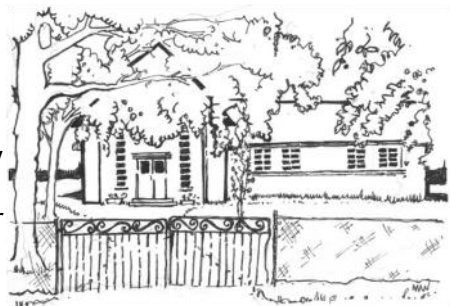
Christmas Services: There are services at Didcot Methodist church at 11.00 pm on Christmas Eve (Communion Service) and 10.00 am on Christmas Day (Barbara Sexton).

Christmas Greetings

Finally, we would like to thank the members of the community who have used Upton Chapel in the past year. This includes Upton Table Tennis Club, the VPA, and the Outside Capering Crew of Morris Dancers. If you would also like to use our church or church hall for your event, please contact Helen Weston on 850031.

Your generous donations have helped this small Methodist Congregation to continue to worship in Blewbury and Upton.

God bless you all, and a Happy Christmas from the members of the Spring Line Methodist Church.



Post Office

I welcome Angela on to the team behind the counter, please be kind to her, as she is still learning, and I need a day off occasionally.

We are building up to the busiest time of the year for the Post Office – Christmas stamps are now on sale. Please ensure that customs labels are put on all packets to non EU countries and an airmail sticker on relevant items before getting to the counter; the people behind you in the queue will appreciate it. Also please note that we don't have time to stick all your stamps on for you.

We are pleased to offer you extended opening hours in the run up to Christmas; on Mon 10th & 17th we will open at 2.00 in the afternoon and close at 5.30pm, whilst on Friday 7th, 14th & 21st we will be open all day until 5pm for those unable to come at other times. Monday 24th we will be open 8.30 - 10.30am.

On the 8th December, and on every Saturday until the spring, the Blewbury Garden Market producers will be bringing their bread, cakes and preserves to be sold at the Post Office, as the stall at the garage will be a bit chilly! Do come and buy some.

Love from Karen & Angela

The last posting dates for AIRMAIL are:

Weds 5th Dec	Asia, Australia, Far East & Japan, New Zealand
Friday 7th Dec	Africa, Caribbean, Central/South America, Middle East
Monday 10th Dec	Eastern Europe, Canada, USA
Weds 12th Dec	Western Europe

Last Posting dates for INLAND Mail are:

Tuesday 13th Dec	Parcels
Tuesday 18th Dec	Second class
Thursday 20th Dec	First class

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