

Upton News



Vol 4 No.19 May/June 2013

I am so enjoying the warmer weather and watching everything grow in the garden. For those of you wondering if you missed May Upton News - this is a combined one for May & June. Unfortunately work pressures got in the way. If you have any contributions for July, please send through no later than the 20th.

Sarah

Inside this issue...

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Upton and Blewbury Methodist Churches, 1826 - 2013

It was a sad day when both Upton and Blewbury Methodist Churches closed on 14 April, but at the same time we (the church members) were glad that our final services were so well supported. The last full service for Upton was on Easter Sunday, a Communion Service led by our minister, Rev Richard Bittleston. It was well supported by regular attendees and visitors to the village, and Upton chapel was completely full for the short service there on Sunday 14th April. Rev Bittleston wanted to emphasise that Blewbury and Upton Methodist churches had

combined 3 years ago to become one church, the Spring Line Church. So we started with a short service in Upton, then many of us walked along the old footpath to continue the service at Blewbury chapel.

Members of Blewbury Brass Band volunteered to play at the Blewbury service (very fitting, because one of the founders of the Band was a Methodist local preacher and chapel trustee for 35 years). The chapel was full to overflowing and the singing raised the roof. Richard asked us not to feel sad at the closure of the chapels but to remember everything they had done in the past, in particular revolutionising the Victorian attitude to children's education by building their chapels with a school room. Methodism thrived in Oxfordshire Villages through the two world wars, but times have changed and the number of members has fallen, so we have to accept that it is time to move on. "Even as we let go of these cherished places, God remains with us"

We would like to thank everyone in the community who has used our buildings in the past few years - your financial support enabled us to continue as long as we have.

Members of the Spring Line Church

Parish Council News

Extract from the minutes (available on www.uptonvillage.co.uk):

Clare Lightfoot has stepped down as Clerk to the Parish Council after seven years and has been replaced by Angela Hoy. John Dickens (Chairman) has announced he will be retiring and a councillor vacancy has resulted.

Discussions were ongoing with the Land Agent for the Coffin Way footpath and proposed hedge-planting, and it was noted that Blewbury Parish Council and Sustainable Blewbury were interested in being involved and a joint approach is being considered. The village notice board had been repaired and was about to be reinstated outside the Village Hall, thanks to Ralph True for his work on this.

The financial position of the PC was considered healthy, and included £5000 for the new cycle pump track about to be installed.

A new 30mph VAS sign has now been installed on the west side of the village and road markings refreshed; There had been several recent problems with the new bus service, with buses failing to stop to pick up people or not arriving by the scheduled time. It was suggested that a local minibus service be investigated similar to South Stoke, subsidised by OCC. The aim would be to cover Upton, West Hagbourne and the Astons which were poorly served

at the moment; this would be in addition to the existing Blewbury/Didcot route but much more frequent. This was not the same as the Dial-a-ride service which provided a service to individual parishioners on demand.

New village hall equipment is needed, such as three electric hand driers. There is a plan to remove the wall between the kitchen and the small adjoining room to give improved storage facilities and install better appliances, for which a £5000 grant was available from the late Theo Gordon's estate.

At Blewbury School there are 153 pupils attending the school and they are planning to get involved in a European Comenius project with Poland, Germany and Italy.

Fr Geoffrey Borrowdale will be leaving the Church benefice. Church services were being well attended and charitable events had been well supported. The PCC had recently held a meeting to discuss raising the profile of St Mary's, including using the Church for concerts and other events. An inter-village tug-of-war was suggested.

It was reported that at the UKAEA Stakeholders Meeting the treatment of the remaining nuclear waste with plans to move it to Sellafield by 2021 were discussed. Outline plans were being submitted to demolish existing UKAEA houses on the site and erect 120 new houses.

Upton Wine Appreciation Society



The Wine Club enjoyed another entertaining evening this month.

The theme this time was pairing cheeses with different wines and with all of the Committee members introducing the wines. All nine of the cheeses were purchased at Grey's in Pangbourne and particular favourites were the Cerne Abbas which was paired with a Chardonnay (Alamos Catena, Mendoza) and the Delice des Cremier (a soft cheese paired with a Pinot noir). The Stinking Bishop cheese had very mixed reviews although the dessert wine (Calcaia Muffa Nobile Dolce Orvieto) with which it was paired was well received. The tawny port which ended the evening seemed a particular hit. On 22 June we will have the annual BBQ and, as places are limited, please book early to avoid disappointment.

Ellie Bunston

Save Our Sites (SOS)

Didcot Archaeology

Didcot and other Oxfordshire residents are calling for sites on Great Western Park, where the fabulous archaeology was recently found, to be turned into a history walk with information points.

Please sign the petition online at www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/ddmile. Or find out more at a new Didcot residents' website www.ddmile.org.uk

Karen Waggott

Didcot Archaeology



Neolithic ceramic bowl

Dates for your diary

Thu 23 May	10.30 Drop In - Village Hall
Sun 26 May	9am St Mary's Church service
Sun 2 Jun	9am St Mary's Church service
Thu 6 Jun	10.30 Drop In - Village Hall
Wed 12 Jun	7.30 WI
Sat 15 Jun	Uptonogood Bike ride
Thu 20 Jun	10.30 Drop In - Village Hall

Burglary on High Street – 2 May

A house on High Street was burgled on 2 May between 9.30 & 11am. The Police are appealing for witnesses. Please contact DC 4482 Chris Leech 01235 556885 or 07800 702861 if you saw anything. In the meantime, please ensure you take precautions to safeguard your house and belongings and also keep an eye open for anything suspicious.

Christian Aid

Thanks largely to three families in the village, we have so far sent no less than 13 boxes of books to help raise funds and expect to be able to pack at least five more. This year's Christian Aid Week was a couple of weeks ago and the message was to BITE BACK AT HUNGER. Christian Aid is joining many other charities in a world-wide campaign ENOUGH FOOD FOR EVERYONE IF (sic!), with a special focus on helping communities to help themselves. Last year the Week raised £12.5 million, and the Government added another £5 million. Upton's contribution compared very well - pro rata - with those from the far bigger villages and Didcot. Collectors will leave envelopes as usual; please be as generous as you feel able.

Elisabeth and Malcolm Wright

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 July edition is **20th June.**

Uptonogood Bike Ride

Saturday 15th June

It's that time of year again when I ask you to give up a day to help us raise money for projects close to home.

Since 2009 we have contributed to the Upton Village hall extension and new play area, Blewbury School (around £5K) and most recently fully funded the new pump track (bike humps) in the village.

This year we hope to raise significant funds towards the village hall kitchen revamp, planned by UVHAT and want to make a contribution to the Air Ambulance whose service could be life saving in a rural village like Upton.

In recognition for the time marshals give, we want to let them have more say on where money is spent. As such we will allocate £20 to each marshal. If you volunteer you will have three options as to where your £20 goes:

1. UVHAT - Kitchen Fund
2. Air Ambulance
3. Any charity of your choice.

If you would like to volunteer please contact us confirming your charity choice and your mobile phone number for use on the day.

Bob Lott and Mike Tibbetts

Tel: 01235 851222

Mobile: 07890 316126

Email: info@uptonogood.org.uk

Web: www.uptonogood.org.uk

Village Hall Cleaning Rota

The Village Hall Committee of UVHAT works to keep our Village Hall up and running so that we can all enjoy what it has to offer. The Village Hall does not receive grants and relies on various money-raising events throughout the year to keep going.

To be able to hire it out the Hall must be kept clean and tidy and this is done by a very small team of volunteers. Due to unforeseen circumstances this already small pool of volunteers is now smaller than ever and we are desperately in need of more helpers and we are appealing to you to lend a hand. Our aim is to expand this small team so as to be in the same position as the 'mowing team', where a sizeable number of volunteers work in pairs, each pair only having to cut the grass two or three times a year.

If we could do this with the Village Hall cleaning rota this would be great and it would no longer be such a burden on so few people. In fact, it wouldn't be a burden on anybody as I'm sure we could all find an hour or so occasionally to help out. We estimate that by working in pairs it would take no longer than 45 minutes to an hour with each pair choosing when in the week is convenient to them.

PLEASE will you help to make this possible? If you are willing to do so, please ring me on 850989 or email me at yvonne@manorlawns.co.uk

Yvonne Collins

VPA News

After a few days of glorious sunshine, I have planted out the last of the perennials I bought last year and had tucked away in a corner and promptly forgot about. The grass is growing too fast (and the dratted dandelions), I am now in that lovely state of mind where all the seedlings are awaiting potting on, or planting out, the beans have popped up, everything is green and lush, the spring flowers are bountiful, the birdies are singing, and the promise that summer is just around the corner.

We don't have a talk on Wednesday 5th June, but we are going to visit the Adwell Estate, I visited in March to see the daffodils, which had been hit badly by the bad weather, but I am sure that the June gardens will be spectacular, please ring if you would like to come, I don't have the final details of where we are meeting up yet, but see me in the Post Office, call 851777 during the day, or email me.

Show schedules available for the show on 14th September, are now available in the Post Office, or email me, karencbrooks@gmail.com and I will email one to you!

We also have a plant stall on the family day at the festival, and are running the tea stall, with homemade scones and jam. Offers of help greatly appreciated, and donations of plants too.

We also have a trip to the Whitchurch Silk Mill on Saturday 6th July; please contact me to be put on the list or for more details.

Happy gardening, Karen Brooks

Blewbury Post Office

Apparently 95% of us can now access our bank accounts at the Post Office, HSBC, First Direct, Co-Op, Barclays, Lloyds TSB, Nationwide, Halifax, Smile, Nat West to name but a few. Save a trip to “town”, and get your cash from us. Euros always in stock and 24hr delivery for all currencies ordered in the mornings.

We will also be the Box Office for ALL Blewbury Festival tickets or events, the WI are also offering to meet up with “onesies” who would like to join in with events but have no one to go with, the lists for each event are with us too!

We are closed for the Bank Holiday Monday on the 27th; allowances paid on Monday will be paid on the 24th.

Karen & Angela

Notes from the Allotment

With a new team at the helm, Blewbury Village Gardens Association has launched its brand new section at the allotments. Our friendly farmer has performed miracles on the clay, plots have been marked out and it is now almost ready for planting. I saw a water pipe sticking out of the ground, so I imagine the water supply will not be far behind.

Back on the main section, it is a hive of activity, and it is great to see half a dozen cars parked indicating lots of eager gardeners getting stuck in. If the weather would be just a little more accommodating, we could all progress in leaps and bounds.

On my own plot, I have now dug up the last of the leeks (yum, leek and

potato soup) - sadly the celeriac was not worth processing, tiny and slug ridden.... I'm not sure whether I will bother this year. There is still some purple sprouting to be harvested and the perpetual spinach has revived itself after its winter doldrums.

So onto the new season! I have FINALLY planted my second early potatoes, what a struggle to get that patch of ground into fit condition; and the bit next to it is so weed strewn that I am going to have to cover it with black plastic so that I will have at least a fighting chance of cultivating it later in the season.

Carrots, salsify (weird plants!), broccoli and parsnips are all sprouting in the raised bed, and in the main legume patch, the broad beans are looking really lush, so I had better protect them against whatever pest will take a fancy to them next. I purchased some mange tout from the Blewbury Garden Market and have popped those in, and seem to have a decent crop of red onion sets coming along. The runner bean and climbing French bean trenches are ready for their occupants; I must harden them off before they go outside!

I have been given some lovely tomato seedlings, which is just as well as only one of my seeds sprouted; but I am excited about growing cucumbers for the first time - apparently the stem can rot if you put too much water near it, so I am advised that planting them in a bottomless plastic pot and then watering outside the pot area will prevent this happening. I shall try it!

Angela Hoy angela.hoy@sky.com

Church News: A Challenge



I wish to pose a challenge, not least to myself!

As you will doubtless be aware, over the next 20 years, this area of South

Oxfordshire is due to see significant change. Some 7,000 new homes are due to be built, mostly in and around Didcot. The houses on Great Western Park have already started to be built. In planning circles, the Didcot, Harwell and Culham area is being referred to as Science Vale. It is expected that over 15,000 new jobs will be created in Science Vale over the next 20 years.

How can we ensure that these new communities will be places where human beings can truly flourish? Of course, houses and jobs are great. But houses and jobs are not enough. We need good schools and good health care. We need leisure and cultural facilities, and a sense of community to overcome loneliness and isolation. We will need a working transport infrastructure. Finally, there are issues of social justice, for example the provision of affordable housing.

It is very tempting to ignore these questions. We tell ourselves they are far too complicated to sort out and frankly we are too busy anyway- let others sort them out. But these questions are not trivial. They are about the sort of communities we wish to see in this area in the years ahead. Yes, of course our politicians, civil servants, and planning

consultants are applying their collective minds. But we all have a vital role to play. All our thoughts, insights and concerns need to be fed into the process.

So go on - share your thoughts and concerns with the local councils and with the developers. The more we share, the better our future will be.

At this point, you might say to yourself- what has all this to do with Christianity? Everything! Jesus has told us to love God and to love our neighbour. As Christians, God asks us to serve our communities; to champion the cause of the most vulnerable; to challenge injustice; to be peace makers and peace keepers; and to be good stewards of God's wonderful creation.

And so I repeat the challenge, to myself as much as to anyone else: what are we doing to ensure that the new communities being built in our area are places where human beings can truly flourish.

Fr Jason

Dementia

If anyone is interested in starting or joining a friendly informal group to discuss practical ways to support people you know or living in the community affected by dementia, learn more about the symptoms, call Oxfordshire Rural Community Council on 01865 883488 ; email orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk.

The Tea Birds WI

We meet the last Tuesday of the month in Upton Village Hall at 8pm. We run outside of the 9-5 working week and will be doing all sorts of activities from the very traditional to the modern.

A full calendar of our activities and all of the details can be found on our website www.tea-birdswi.co.uk we also can be found on Facebook and Twitter so our members can be easily kept up to speed.

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/TheTeaBirdsWI

Follow us on Twitter: @TeaBirdsWI

For any questions and queries we can be emailed at

tea-birdswi@hotmail.co.uk.

As well as the monthly meeting we also have some spin off groups. We have a knitting and crochet group that meets in the Fleur De Lys in East Hagbourne and a walking group. Dates/details will be confirmed via Facebook and Twitter as these are not currently scheduled at set times.

Jo (President - Tea Birds WI)

Upton 50's Club Winners

February

£10 Sheila Dawson (83)
£7 Derek Vokins (134)
£5 Margaret Maytham (145)
£4 Lucy c/o Cathy Brown

March

£25 Lindsey Lott (114)
£25 Mrs McBain (108)
£10 Frances Telling (47)
£7 David Hartley (21)
£5 Julie Williams (23)
£4 Katherine Langley

Blewbury WI

We are planning to attend lots of events for the festival, so our diary here will not be so long, as we can't fit everything in! We will be hosting our evening with desserts on the 12th, building a scarecrow, making a banner, putting in a quiz team and dancing the night away at the disco, come and join our group if you are on your own, or your other half doesn't want to go!

Dates for June:

- Wed 5th June; Lyn's walk, (with Sandra instead) meet at the village hall at 9.30am, for a circular walk to Chilton, with coffee stop. All welcome!
- Wednesday 12th: Blewbury Village Hall, 7.30pm, Festival event, Jason Prior tells us about what it's like to be the architect for the London 2012 games. Delicious desserts and wine or juice. Tickets from the Post Office.
- Summer Auditions
- Friday 28th: RAL lecture, "The Universe and how to Explain It"

For more details, or to join the Mah Jong or Scrabble group, or if you wish to join us, please ring Judy on 850381.

Karen Brooks