

Upton News



Vol 4 No.27 April 2014

I had every intention of publishing this month's edition on time. Then on 28 March a series of violent thunderstorms headed up the A34 from Newbury and onto the M40 to Birmingham, hitting Upton en route.

Lightning took out a significant number of phones and broadband connections in the village, including those of your editor with unwelcome consequences. Unfortunately BT OpenReach failed to register a major outage, and a stream of different BT engineers turned up each day to repair the faults one by one.

As a result, this issue is somewhat late and some items have passed their best-before date. Please don't let that deter you from getting contributions to me for next month by the 25th!

Brian Rippon



Lightning on 28 March

Uptonogood!

This year's Uptonogood will be on **Saturday 14th June**. The event has become a firm fixture within the local mountain bike fraternity and we already have 350 riders registered from ages 1 to 77!

Over the last four years we've donated over £27K to local causes (see our website <http://www.uptonogood.org.uk/history/fund-raising>) and hope to add to this total. Preparations are well underway but it's now time to start the hardest task of securing the 50+ marshals for the day. As last year, each volunteer is invited to nominate a charity to which we will make a £20 donation.

If you would like to be part of the day but don't see yourself on a bike, please consider volunteering as a marshal and contact either Bob Lott (851222) or Mike Tibbetts (851474).

The Friends of The Ridgeway



The Ridgeway Day

Saturday, 10th May, at Court Hill Centre, Wantage

10.30am to 4.00pm

- Walk The Ridgeway - Britain's oldest road. Guided walks to Segsbury Castle
- Nature trail and treasure hunt for the kids
- Relax at Court Hill, and enjoy the gorgeous view
- Lunches and home-made cakes at the Barn Café
- Meet the volunteers helping to preserve The Ridgeway and its wildlife
- Admire art inspired by The Ridgeway
- Birds of prey display
- Live music

From Wantage, take the A338 towards Hungerford, and turn right to The Ridgeway Centre just before the crest of Court Hill. Limited Parking.

The Friends of The Ridgeway (Charity no 1107926) supports the preservation of The Ridgeway and its quiet enjoyment by the public.

www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk
ridgewayfriends@googlemail.com

Hagbourne Bowling Club

Hagbourne Bowling Club is looking to increase its profile in the immediate area. The club opens for the summer season on Monday 7 April, 7.30pm. Club nights are every Monday through till September, with matches/social events most other evenings. New bowlers/beginners/social members are all welcome and the club has its annual Open Day starting at 2pm on Saturday 10th May.

For more details, contact Howard Rose -07854 610926.



Thank You

Jo and Glenie Joel would like to thank all who came to our rescue one soggy Saturday in February. The stream of Stream Road was a veritable torrent, had broken its little banks and turning left was covering our gravel and filling the foul water drain - no bathroom drainage, no kitchen drainage. A phone call to Bob Lott, Chair of the Parish Council, created the hive of activity. The stream bed was cleared of plant life, the little banks were reinforced by sandbags [produced from I do not know where by the tireless Bob] - there was even a small dam across the road to divert the river down the road back to the torrent. And our gravel was dry. And not to forget the kind neighbour who offered us the use of their loo. So - THANK YOU BOB and the Stream Gang for coming to our rescue.

*Jo and Glenie,
Winterbourne, Stream Road*

Jumble Sale

A reminder of the Pre-loved (Jumble!) Sale on **Saturday 10 May** to be held at the Village Hall - all profits being donated to the Village Hall Kitchen Fund.

I have already received promises of items for the sale, but now is the time to start sorting out your clothing, accessories, books, white elephant etc., so that you're ready when the time comes to offload all your unwanted property! We will be accepting items on the evening of Friday 9 May at the Village Hall meeting room between 5pm and 9pm.

Giulia Rippon

PCSO Report

I'm glad to report that this month there have been no problems to give any real concern to villagers and things have been quite peaceful in Upton. I did try a speed watch check on the A417 recently but unfortunately got called away to an incident not long after I set up. I will try again this month to set up another speed watch.

I have recently issued two Section 59 warnings to two youths using bikes in an anti social manner in Chilton. So please call the Thames Valley emergency number 101 if you should witness anyone riding around the tracks or in Upton itself in an anti social manner.

PCSO Mike Clayden
Thames Valley Police

Michael.clayden@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Village Clubs & Organisations

Blewbury WI

Judy 850381

Drop In Sessions

Yvonne Collins 850989

Short Mat Bowls Club

Tony Durbin 850035

Table Tennis Club

Bob Lott 851222

Tea Birds WI

Jo Christie tea-birdswi@hotmail.co.uk

Theatre Club

Malcolm Wright 850705

Upton Oil Syndicate

Colin Batchelor 01491 672444

Village Produce Association

Eileen Bracken 510095

Wine Appreciation Society

Kevin Jacklin 851404

Do you run a village club or organisation? Please let us have your details and we will add them to the list.

Blewbury Burglary

Between Friday 21st and Monday 24th March, offender(s) broke into a shed at the Pavilion in Bohams Road, Blewbury, and stole a ride on lawn mower.

If you have seen any suspicious looking people or vehicles in the area or have any information relating to this message please call the police on 101.

St Mary's Church

Services are as follows:

Sun 30th March 10.00am Family service for Mothering Sunday, posies will be distributed. Refreshments follow the service

Sun 6th April 9.00am Sung Eucharist*

Sun 13th April 9.00am Eucharist and distribution of Palm crosses

Fri 18th April 10.00am Good Friday all age family service*

Sun 20th April 9.00am Easter Day Eucharist

Sun 27th April 9.00am Eucharist

*followed by refreshments

Weekday services: Tuesday morning 9.30am - Morning Prayer, followed by Eucharist at 10.00am.

Lent lunches are being held on Saturdays at St Andrew's, East Hagbourne, from 12.00 noon to 2.00pm. Upton ladies will be providing the soup lunch on Saturday 5th April, all proceeds to St Mary's church, please come along to support this.

A Ploughman's lunch in aid of Sobell House is being held at Hagbourne School on Good Friday, 18th April from noon to 1.30pm. All welcome. Please support this very worthy cause.

It is really good news that the Revd John Clarke will be joining the Benefice as associate priest in March. A licensing service will take place on Thursday 27th March at St Michael's Church Blewbury at 7.30pm. Everyone is very welcome to attend.

Sustainable Blewbury - Blewbury School - Blewbury Village Society

Blewbury Green May Fair

Saturday May 10th, 11.00am-3.30pm, at Blewbury School

An event with something for everyone...

For children: face-painting, competitions and games, wood craft activities, making their own bread...

Refreshments: PTA bar, ice-creams, teas, barbecue, home made soup and bread rolls...

Entertainment: Blewbury Brass Band, Didcot Junction folk group, school choir and country dancing display...

Lots more, including the Green Bus, a Raffle, up-cycling, stalls and local sustainable energy businesses, encouraging bees into your garden, eco-renovating your home, reducing your carbon footprint and saving money all at the same time.

Rectors Reflections

Beyond the Easter Bunny

Well, it will soon be Easter. I wonder what image comes to mind when you think of Easter. Chocolate eggs? Fluffy yellow chickens? Easter Bunnies? Days out with the family on Easter Bank Holiday Monday?

Yes, all these are familiar images of Easter. But there are other images as well. And one of them is the image of fire.

Why fire? Because many people have found fire to be an effective symbol of the power and presence of God. Fire is mysterious; it gives light and heat; but it also consumes. As human beings, we think we have fire under control, but even today we have to be careful - fire has a life of its own. We think that we can domesticate fire, and most of the time this is true. But there are always times when we are brought face to face the sheer power of fire.

Centuries ago, people in Britain and Ireland developed the custom of lighting a new fire on Easter Eve. It was felt to be important that this fire was lit from flint, and not from an existing fire. This meant that the new fire was indeed a new fire - it was not simply the continuation of an existing fire. This new fire symbolised the new life of the resurrection - the new life that came into existence with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the first Easter Day.

The custom has died out in many English Churches, but it has been re-introduced in several churches recent years. The new fire can be something very small and modest- a tiny little fire, a few inches across. Or it can be something huge and dramatic - a veritable bonfire, visible for miles around.

Our local tradition is to light an Easter Eve fire outside the north porch of the church in Blewbury. The ceremony lasts a few minutes, and is followed by a special service in church.

Everyone is very welcome to attend the ceremony. Whether you would describe yourself as having a strong Christian faith, a bit of a faith, or no faith at all, do come along.

My hope and my prayer is that the flames of the new fire will lead us deeper into the mystery of God Himself, and that we will experience afresh His transforming love for each one of us, and for all His creation.

And, in any event, it certainly makes a change from all those bunnies!

Fr Jason

Submissions for *Upton News* should be sent to news@uptonvillage.co.uk.

Deadline for the May edition is 25th April.

Dates for your diary

Mon 14 Apr	Annual Parish Meeting
Tue 15 Apr	U3A AGM
Wed 16 Apr	8pm Wine Appreciation Club, Village Hall
Thu 17 Apr	Drop In, Village Hall
Tue 29 Apr	8pm Tea Birds WI, Village Hall
Thu 1 May	Drop In, Village Hall
Sat 10 May	Jumble Sale in aid of VH kitchen
Sat 10 May	VPA visit to RHS Wisley
Sat 10 May	Blewbury Green May Fair
Sat 10 May	The Ridgeway Day
Sat 10 May	Hagbourne Bowling Club Open Day

Message from a reader of the Upton Village website

Only just discovered this website via the Bring back the Didcot, Newbury & Southampton railway Facebook page!

Enjoyed the photographs of the station which is part of my family history. My grandfather Leonard William Webb was stationmaster there from 1916 onwards. My father Stanley (born 1913) and his two brothers grew up there and went to the village school. I do not know how many years my grandfather was at Upton station but probably for at least 11 years. I have a letter of reference dated April 1930 from Charles W. Gale, the headmaster of Blewbury Endowed School, where my father spent the last three years of his schooling (1924/5? - 1927/8?) before joining the GWR aged 16 at Didcot the same month. I think my grandfather later moved on to be stationmaster at Compton and/or Hampstead Norreys before retiring in 1951. Unfortunately it is difficult for me find records as I now live in Romania!

If anyone who has researched Upton's history can give me more information about my grandfather's time at Upton I would be very grateful.

Many years ago I saw a photograph printed in a book which was taken around 1920 and showed a man standing with a small boy at the south end of the station building looking up towards the old road bridge where the photographer must have been standing. The photo had been printed using a fairly coarse halftone screen so it was impossible to identify the man and boy but I like to think it was my father and grandfather! If anyone from Upton knows the origin of the photo again I would be very interested in obtaining a decent size print to examine closely.

Laurie Webb laurence.webb3@btopenworld.com

Parish Council News

At its meeting on Tuesday 18th March, the Council agreed to a proposal to install a concrete table tennis table on the recreation ground, subject to consultation with local residents. The cost of the table and the surrounding playing area will be met by a donation from Uptonogood, and it is hoped that many villagers will enjoy this new facility for years to come.

Upton Village Hall is seeking to enlarge and upgrade its kitchen facilities, to allow for bigger and better catering events. The management committee have applied for a WREN grant to help cover the costs of this work, and UPC has agreed to set aside £1000 towards the project.

The Vale of White Horse District Council has launched a consultation period on its revised Local Plan 2031 giving details of the housing delivery update; you should by now have received an explanatory leaflet through your door. The consultation closes on April 4th, so if you have something to say please go to the consultation website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone or call 01235 540 499 for more information.

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Monday 14th April at 7.30pm with refreshments being served from 7.15pm. Reports will be given summarizing the activities of the PC over the last year; however this is also your opportunity to help set our agenda for the coming year, so please come along and have your say.

Horse Matters

If anyone would like to collect free manure from a heap in the horses' field on the footpath to Blewbury opposite the fruit farm, they are welcome to do so, but please ring me first on 850268.

If anyone has moved to the village recently who is an experienced rider and would like to hack out with me I would be really pleased. My horses are pretty good but the thoroughbred was a racehorse once so needs a good, confident rider and experience; this probably means having owned your own horse at some point, not having ridden a donkey on the beach as a child!

Hilary Powell

50's Club Winners

January

£10 Mrs Maunsell	88
£7 Mrs Rippon	60
£5 Mr Beckles	99
£4 Mr Hill	101

February

£10 Mr Bucknell	55
£7 Mrs Langley	94
£5 Mr Paddon	9
£4 Mrs Maunsell	88

March

£25 Mr Burrows	31
£25 Mrs Miller	6
£10 Mrs Scotney	27
£7 Mr Paddon	9
£5 Ms Rabbetts	150
£4 Mr Powell	146

Wine Appreciation Club

The March meeting, hosted by Simon Powell, was a very interesting evening on the wines of Spain. We learnt that Spain has over 1 million hectares of vineyards, the most vineyard land of any country in the world, and more than 300 planted grape varieties. The evening began with a well received Sainsbury's Cava Rosado. Other favourites throughout the evening were the Sainsbury's Priorat - a Sainsbury's Taste the Difference fruity red at a reasonable price, and the Wine Society's Brandal Albarino Rias Baixas, a white which members enjoyed. The evening ended with a very traditional style Rioja – Rioja Alta Vina Arana – again from the Wine Society. This was a reserva Rioja. Next month sees wines being paired with cheese from Greys at Pangbourne and eight different speakers from the club sharing their wines. If you are interested in joining the wine club please do speak to any of the committee.

Ellie Bunston

Cava Rosado	2011	Sainsburys	£9.79
Brandal Albarino Rias Baixas	2012	Wine Society	£8.95
Castro de Lobarzan Godello	2012	Wine Society	£11.95
Marques de Murriete Blanco Capellania	2008	Wine Society	£14.95
Vina Zorzal Graciano Navarra	2011	Wine Society	£6.75
Priorat	2011	Sainsburys	£8.49
Casa Castillo Monastrell	2011	Wine Society	£8.95
La Rioja Alta Vina Arana	2005	Wine Society	£16.00

Barley Mow – As Was

It used to be a pub - now it's a 'concept'! This is an extract from a job ad on Caterer.com for a manager for the new-look Barley Mow Blueberry:

Manager required for new café, bar and restaurant in affluent South Oxfordshire village of Blewbury. The Blueberry by Farley & Peterson Ltd is a new concept opening May 2014 providing a café and deli, brunch menu and wood fired pizza and sharing plates. Supporting field to fork with a quality focused well delivered menu The Blueberry will offer value for money in a contemporary environment (think the best of London in Oxfordshire).

Targeting the coffee to lunch to evening market The Blueberry will appeal the immediate community, business and leisure market.

Somewhere to be—a flat white, poached eggs on toast, fresh juice, pint of bitter, tea and cake, wood fired pizza or glass of chilled Sancerre - think the Blueberry.

Blewbury WI

Spring has sprung, we have all given a sigh of relief that winter is over, and are looking forward to getting out in the garden, and going to new places with our lovely WI ladies, we will have held our AGM by the time you read this, and will have new committee members and hopefully, some new ideas too! We wish everyone a “Happy Easter” too!

Tuesday 2nd ; Lyn’s walk; meet at 10am, Ticklers Folly car park, it may be muddy so stout boots and walking poles may be helpful and pennies for coffee, everyone welcome.

Tuesday 8th 10.30am, coffee with Joan at Style Acre Tearooms

Tuesday 8th; 42nd Street, Amey Hall, Abingdon

Friday 18th; RAL lecture on the “Mary Rose”

Wednesday 23rd, WI meeting, “Anniversaries of 2014” with Graham Horn

Monday 28th; Resolutions debate at Horton cum Studley

Tuesday 29th, lunch at the Packhorse/Eating Inn (whatever it’s called now!)

Wednesday 30th; tour of London Docklands

We send our deepest condolences to the family of Joanna Thompson, who was a member of Blewbury WI for many years.

For more detail of any of our events, or to join the Mah Jong or Scrabble group, or if you wish to join us, please ring Judy on 850381.

Karen Brooks

George and Dragon

At the George and Dragon, we have redesigned our menu especially for 2014, we also have many events that will be happening throughout the spring.

This month we have **Fish and Chip Quiz Night** on Friday 4th April. All welcome, cash prizes to be won! £2 entry, questions begin at 8pm. Special offer of the evening: Two for £15 Fish and Chips.

We have another one of our ever popular **Steak Nights** on Friday 9th May. Featuring live music from Al Jenkins! We have a selection of steaks for you to choose from: 8oz

Fillet, 10oz Ribeye, 10oz Sirloin and 16oz T-Bone, the best you can get, fresh and local from Coscote Farm in West Hagbourne. Or have our Mixed Grill at the special price of £15.

We always have fresh “Top of the Range!” free range eggs from local chickens for sale: £1.50 per ½ dozen, £3.00 per dozen.

To keep up to date with our specials and events, visit

www.thegeorge-dragon.com or like our Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/george.and.dragon.upton.

Theatre Group

All seats are taken for our next outing to the Watermill on 17 April to see “*Sense and Sensibility*”.

Bring Up The Bodies

Swan Theatre, Stratford, 24 February 2014

Why on earth were two stage adaptations of two prize-winning fictional biographies so amazingly popular that we had to buy tickets over six months in advance? I gather that tickets were even selling at well over purchase price on eBay.

Admittedly, the novels were adapted by Mike Poulton, who had several very successful versions to his credit - most notably for us *The Canterbury Tales* - and it could have been interesting to compare this presentation of Henry VIII with those on TV, and even by Shakespeare. We were limiting ourselves to the second in the series, retailing the downfall of Anne Boleyn, but it could have been appallingly adapted, it could have been a travesty of the Mantel original, it could have been abysmally acted.

It wasn't. The ecstatic reviews were justified. I recollected passages of dialogue and certain incidents from the book brought to vivid life on stage. I enjoyed the slick movement from scene to scene, effected with little in the way of props in a very Shakespearean manner, so that three hours passed without longeurs. The Swan is splendidly equipped for this sort of production. I thought the language excellently convincing, a touch of Tudor without being obscure, and verging at times on the poetic. It was even much funnier than expected, given that it is about

the intrigue and dishonesty needed to bring a queen to trial. Above all, it was, through uniformly exceptional acting, a delight to see characters brought to complex and credible life. Special mention has to go to Ben Miles as Thomas Cromwell, not only because the part is enormous, but also because he made this Machiavellian fixer somehow forgivable and even likeable. The portrait of Henry was similarly much deeper and more multi-faceted than the lustful fat man of cartoons, while the three women in his life (thus far) Queens Catherine and Anne, and queen-to-be Jane, were wonderfully differentiated and believable.

We went on talking about it on the way home in the mini-bus; I don't think anybody had found the show wanting. How soon before Mantel finishes the trilogy and the RSC depicts Cromwell's demise?

Malcolm Wright

Annual Litter Pick

The village annual litter pick was held on Saturday 15th March, a beautiful sunny spring morning. Unfortunately partially due to some confusion about the actual date only 15 parishioners came along to help but with the ideal conditions and the significantly reduced amount of litter at the roadside the usual areas were quickly tidied and it was back for a well earned cup of tea and biscuits in just under two hours.

Our thanks to all those who came along to help and in particular to John Lightfoot who went round with his trailer to pick up the fly tipped items and the bags of litter.



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Didcot & District University of the Third Age meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 2pm at Didcot Civic Hall. Visitors are welcome to come to a meeting as a taster before joining.

The April meeting will be the AGM and will be held on 15 April.

D&D U3A is a self-help, self-managed lifelong learning co-operative for older people no longer in full time work, providing opportunities for its

members to share learning experiences in a wide range of interest groups and to pursue learning not for qualifications, but for fun. There are over 25 interest groups including family history, gardening, wine appreciation, dance, science and maths, play reading, creative writing, walking, bridge, crafts, books, poetry, singing, badminton, photography and five languages. There's something for everyone!

Tel: 07804 159993

didcotdistrictU3A@virginmedia.com

<http://u3asites.org.uk/didcot>

Post Office News

Royal Mail have announced their price rises: 1st and 2nd class stamps are rising by 2p and 3p respectively, (both standard and large letter), so it's worth buying a few extra to beat the price rise. They all re-value, so will still be valid whatever price you paid, as long as they have 1st or 2nd on them! Parcel prices are also changing, although the good news is that small parcels between 1kg and 2kg are going down in price! (everything else will be going up we hear!)

The old £50 note with John Houbron on them are being withdrawn at the end of April, and we have until the end of October 2014 to bank or swap them for new ones!

Thank you to everyone who has been bringing in their Sainsburys active kids vouchers, used stamps, and old shoes, they are all going to good charities!

Our friend Andrew is in need of good boots again, if anyone has men's boots they no longer require (size 11) he would be very grateful (please bring them in to us!).

The BGM continue here at the Post Office on Saturday mornings, fresh bread and cakes, eggs, jam etc. are available throughout the week too! Steve's hens are kept very busy!

We will be closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday, allowances are usually paid in to accounts before these days. Customers with "key" meters who need emergency top ups, ring/text my mobile 07825 154842 (please don't go cold or without a cup of tea, we will come and open the PO!)

Happy Easter to everyone!

Love from Karen & Angela

Village Produce Association

We had a good turn-out for our talk from Brian Winsley on Mushrooms, Toadstools and Pixies. He had some great pictures of weird and wonderful examples of 'safe' and 'not so safe' fungi. I think I'll just stick to Sainsbury's mushrooms and not bother foraging!!

Our next talk is: Wednesday 2nd April at 7.30pm in the Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall. The speaker is Mr Russell Cherry talking about The Oldest Road - The Ridgeway Explored. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible as it is, apparently, a very interesting talk.

Please note that we have a coach trip to RHS Gardens, Wisley on Saturday 10th May setting off at 9.00am from pick-up points in Upton and Blewbury. Full details will be available in Blewbury Post Office - if you are interested please put your name down on the list, or give me a call on 01235 510095.

Well - it looks as though the weather is now beginning to behave itself so we can get gardening. Still very sticky, but, a bit of a turnover to dry it out and a wiz up and down with the rotavator in a couple of weeks should do the trick on the allotment. Potatoes are chitting well. Thanks to Savages for having such a wide variety of potatoes and glad to see the Pink Fir Apple which I love.

Good News!! Our Schedule for the Annual Show on Saturday 12th July is now available at Blewbury Post Office. We would love to have a bumper number of entrants this year and we have some really good classes in all the different categories. An early start will give you plenty of time to take your photos, do a bit of handicraft and practice the designated recipe for a Victoria Sponge Cake - I know someone who has tried it and it's great! If you want a copy of the Schedule e-mailed to you, please contact me on VPA.in.bl.up@gmail.com. I will be telling you more about the special events at the Annual Show in future Bulletins. Don't forget, if you have any very old tools I could borrow for the Show, please use the VPA e-mail address or ring me on 01235 510095.

DID YOU KNOW?

In days gone by, it was not uncommon in springtime to see a farmer drop his trousers and pants and sit down on the soil. If the soil was not too cold, the farmer knew it was time to sow his crop. If you want to avoid misunderstandings with your neighbours, you are better off trying this old trick with your bare elbow!!

Happy gardening

Eileen

Brown Bin Discount

Throughout April and May, the council is offering all new garden waste customers a 10 per cent discount when they sign up for the service, which would normally cost £37 per year.