

Upton News



Vol 4 No.6 January/February 2012

Our first edition of the year - a Happy New Year to you all and let's hope that 2012 is a good one for us all. This is a combined January/February edition and we will be back to normal in March. We are likely to do a joint issue in the summer too. In this issue we have reported a theft of dogs from Upton, some wine recommendations, a film review and weather folk lore. We look forward to and welcome contributions from the village and if you want to include any articles please send them through to news@uptonvillage.co.uk.



Sarah

Parish Council News

As a result of the cold and snowy winters we have had the past few years, the Parish Council has taken up an offer from the local authority for a free tonne of salt. This will be stored in the garage building on the recreation field and may be used to refill existing salt bins or apply to road surfaces directly. To aid this we have also purchased a small hand propelled spreader.

It is not the intention of the Parish Council to take on the responsibility of salting roads. However we wish it to be known that both salt and the means to spread it are available to any individual in the village who would like to use it to salt public roads during icy or snowy conditions. Contact any member of the PC if you wish to use the salt spreader.

Bob Lott

Planning Applications:

11/02900/FUL - proposed erection of single and two storey extensions. Erection of garage and car port with home office/gym over at Littlecote, High Street. Applicants Mr & Mrs Caffyn. The Council had no objections to the proposals. The applicant advised the Council that there is currently a TPO on the hedges and trees surrounding the property.

11/02791/FUL - proposed erection of a two bay car port. Proposed widening of existing access at Torpids, High Street. Applicants Mr & Mrs W Betts. The council had no objections.

Inside this issue...

- Stolen Dogs
- Film Review
- Blewbury Players auditions

Stolen Tibetan Spaniels

Heather and I had 6 dogs stolen from our kennel in Upton on Tuesday 27 December at 3.40pm whilst I was returning from a walk with other dogs. I witnessed the theft but was too far away to prevent it happening.

One of the dogs turned up on our doorstep at 10.00pm that night and the next day the police returned one in the afternoon who they found tied up outside a caravan on a travellers site in Tadley near Basingstoke. Another was returned that night having been found wandering in the same area and taken to the police station.

Friends set up a Facebook page called Missing Tibetan Spaniels which now has over 2300 members all over the world which provided many ideas to follow up. The Thames Valley police together with Dog Lost and Dog Watch Alert have been amazing and as a result of everyone's efforts two more were found in the same area on 6 January. We now have just one 8 month old puppy bitch missing, Alice who is red with a white chest and a white ruff.

All our dogs were micro-chipped so we would advise all dog owners to have this done whatever the age of your dog as well as having an up to date photo as these help so much in the recovery of lost dogs.

Liz Scoates



Village Carol Singing

Many thanks to everyone who came carol singing round the village on the night of Thursday 22nd December and to the Upton handbell ringers, led by Daphne Simpson, who treated the singers to beautifully played carols as they returned to the hall for some well earned mulled wine and mince pies. We are grateful to all the villagers who kindly made a donation. Between us we raised the sum of £171.43 for local charity, Didcot TRAIN Youth Project. Well done, and thanks to everyone involved.

Sarah Tenant-Flowers

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 March edition is 20th February.

Air Ambulance

The Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance are looking to recruit some new volunteers to keep this emergency service operational 365 days of the year. They are looking for individuals who like meeting new people and trying new things. They provide training and pay all reasonable expenses.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, visit www.tvacaa.org or contact Eleanor Green on 0300 999 0135 (mobile 07717 290325), eleanor@tvacaa.org



Poppy Appeal

Thank you very much to everybody who contributed towards the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal in November. We raised another record amount - £440.00.

Without your help, we would be unable to continue our vital welfare and benevolent work. Thank you all Very Much.

Helen Weston
(Local Organiser)

Any Questions?

The Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council, Alison Thomson is delighted to present a charity Any Questions at the Guildhall, Abingdon on 20 January, 7 for 7.30pm at the Guildhall, Abingdon, £10 (to include welcome drink and buffet). The panellists are Nicola Blackwood MP, Andrew Smith MP, Catherine Bearder MEP and Michael St John Parker, former Head of Abingdon School. The event will be chaired by Terry Cox, Alderman and former Leader of the Council. All the money raised at the event will be donated to Help for Heroes and the South and Vale Carers.

Contact Clare Lightfoot (850486) if you would like to go as a group and she will organise tickets.

Shelter

From January and throughout 2012, current Local Housing Allowance claimants will start experiencing cuts to their Housing Benefit.

You can read more about the changes, and estimated losses for claimants on the Shelter website. If you are struggling to pay your housing costs, you can seek professional help from Shelter.

Details of how to find housing, debt or welfare benefits advice are available at

www.shelter.org.uk/getadvice.

If you have any questions about the upcoming Housing Benefit changes, please contact Anne Baxendale, Public Affairs manager, on 0844 515 1182 or anne_baxendale@shelter.org.uk

St Mary's Services

Sunday services:

January

22 9am Eucharist
29 9am Eucharist
celebrating Candlemas

February

5 9am Eucharist, followed by refreshments
12 9am Eucharist
19 10am Christingle All Age Family Service, followed by refreshments
26 9am Eucharist

Weekdays:

Tuesday mornings 10.00 am service of Holy Communion. We invite anyone, who is unable to attend the Sunday service, but would like the opportunity to receive communion, to join with us, on Tuesdays for this

short service which lasts approx half an hour. Come as often, or occasionally as you are able. You will be made very welcome.

Tuesday evenings: "Exploring the Silence". This gathering takes place, from 6.00 to 6.30pm. It is Spiritual Meditation, with the focus being on our Lord Jesus Christ. A prayer is said, followed by a short piece of recorded music, which leads into a period of approx. 20 minutes of silence. We are encouraged to have our own personal prayer word or "Mantra" to focus on while clearing our minds of everyday thoughts. No one said that this is easy, we are still learning. It can however be very rewarding. All welcome. For more information please contact Jessie on 851206.

Clare Lightfoot

A New Year's Resolution

You've probably already thought about your New Year resolution, but in case you haven't, may I suggest one? The resolution is quite simple - to take a daily walk. Nothing very exciting about that, you may well say. But why have I suggested this? Well, of course, to start with, a bit of gentle physical exercise every day does us the world of good. But there's more to it than that. A walk is a great opportunity, in the midst of our busy lives, to find the space for some quality time with God. It might be that we walk with friends, or alone. In course of our walk, we might notice something beautiful, or meet someone we never expected to meet. We might meet no one at all,

but somehow the process of walking has helped us to feel more at peace with ourselves and with the world.

The Bible is full of references to walking- sometimes these refer to a literal walk, and sometimes to a figurative walk. The Bible uses the metaphor of a walk in two main ways. The first way refers to how we interact with another person - how we "walk with them". The second is a way about speaking about a lifestyle. When we go on a walk, we choose to go in a particular direction. Similarly, we choose how we are going to live our lives, the goal we're aiming at - it might be the goal of helping someone else, or it might be the goal of pursuing our own selfish advantage.

The earliest reference to walking in the Bible is a reference to God Himself. The author of Genesis pictures God “walking” in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. God later promises to His people, that he will “walk among them and be their God - a promise fulfilled in the life of Jesus. There is a wonderful story about Jesus meeting two disciples on a walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus - but the

disciples don't recognise him until the very end of the story!

Sometimes we think we're walking through life alone. But we never walk alone, because God is always there with us. We might not recognise him, or even notice him. But he is there, our companion and friend, walking beside us through the good times and the bad.

Happy walking!

Fr Jason

Spring Line Methodist Church

All services start at 10.30 am Upton

January

22 John Dennis

29 Derek Morton

February

5 Marlene Chalkley

7 Council Meeting 7.30pm

12 Alan Fudge

17 Rev Richard Bittleston
(Holy Communion)

24 Brenda Boyer

We were delighted that St. Michael's Sunday School held their Nativity Service in the Blewbury Centre. The offering was £140, for the Charity Action for Children, which supports and speaks out for the UK's most vulnerable and neglected children and young people.

A big thank you to all those who supported us at our recent coffee morning, which made over £335 for the Spring Line Church. Not much left over, and we gave what there was to the Helen House and Oxfam shops in Didcot, so none of your donations were wasted.

The weather has just reminded us that it can really blow, rain and freeze. That's the way it is from time to time. There can be a long run of stability and calm. We take it for granted - sometimes we actually moan about it. Then the winds of change swell up; the rain beats down. The weather has turned for many, many churches. Years and years of relative stability and the shock that is the wind of change is as real as being caught in a downpour. Change is neither good nor bad - change is essential. We know that we must have hot, cold, wet and dry to have a healthy climate. We're not quite so good at accepting that it's just as important that change is part of the necessary dynamic of life. Responding to it, being blown as seeds into strange fields is our challenge. It's frightening; creation needs it. We need it to see what the real possibility is, the real movement of the Spirit of God. May courage be our blessing in 2012.

Richard Bittleston

Minister for the Spring Line Church

Blewbury Players – calling all thespians



If you would like to audition for *She Stoops to Conquer*, contact Peter Saunders on 850245 to arrange an audition, which will be held on 25/26 February. Small and big parts for adults of all ages and we anticipate some parts for children of about 12 or older.

Visit our website at www.blewburyplayers.co.uk or visit our Facebook page.

Future of Oxfordshire Theatre Company

As you know the Oxfordshire Theatre Company (OTC) has been passionate about bringing high quality theatre to rural communities for more than 30 years, touring a wide variety of exciting productions for all ages. I recently had an email to say that the 4th generation of one family is now enjoying our productions.

As you will be aware, in addition to losing most of our local authority funding we also lost regular Arts Council funding in 2011. This means that from 31st March the company no longer has the core funding which was vital to create the productions we brought to you. Since the news of the cuts, the Board of Directors has been assessing new ways of working and have decided in order to ensure a sustainable future for the company, OTC will be taking a break and will not be touring next year. During this time a restructure will be planned to work through other sources of funding and hope to have a decision by early summer 2012.

I thank you for your support.

Joanna Longhurst
General Manager

50's Club

October

£10 Mrs Dickens (149)

£7 Jo (G&D) (153)

£5 Mr Donoghue (14)

£4 Mr Morris (8)

November

£10 Mr Collins (126)

£7 Mrs Arnold (142)

£5 Mrs Hubbard (54)

£4 Mrs Lightfoot (74)

Dates for your diary

| | |
|------------|--|
| Wed 18 Jan | Wine Club 8pm Village Hall |
| Thu 19 Jan | Drop In, 10.30am Village Hall |
| Fri 20 Jan | Any Questions, Abingdon |
| Thu 2 Feb | Drop In, 10.30am Village Hall |
| Wed 15 Feb | Wine Club 8pm Village Hall |
| Thu 16 Feb | Drop In, 10.30am Village Hall |
| Mon 27 Feb | Some Like it Hotter, 7.30pm Village Hall |

January & February

February is the last winter month, and the adage 'ring around the moon - snow soon' is the one to watch. Just after Christmas the adage was "as the day gets longer - the cold gets stronger". However, the frost hurts no weeds. The winter months are also the ploughing months, and it should be finished before April, as anyone ploughing after this was considered in a very derogatory fashion. Plough Monday was the first Monday after Epiphany when ploughing resumed after the Christmas break. However, most of the ploughing is now done in the autumn. The ploughmen always considered themselves "boys" and there were various songs relating to the poor ploughboys working in storm and tempest. December, January and February are usually associated with wind, rain and snow. Many of the sayings associated with clouds are from these months. They apply ashore as well as at sea. Willow wisps and mares tails (high cirrus clouds) - tall ships shorten sails. The "Hadley" cell of strong

winds in the stratosphere are reflected in strong winds on the surface, frequently in the opposite direction. The high cirrus was a starting feature for the warm front.

The end of December usually brought the end of "winter blues" - also known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD) - a winter phenomenon. The summer equivalent doesn't exist, but "it never rains but it pours" comes from getting depressed in damp and dark rainy days. The winter activities in the drying barns, or blacksmith forge were also places to generate country lore, certainly about drying barley. There are some relating to fires, - "sunshine puts out a fire", if a fire is hard to start - cold heart, and a fire crackling is said to be walking with snow. Now is the season for "a wise man to carry his cloak - and a fool to want his". If you follow the weather on 27 February - the 12 hours can be divided into 12 months, and that is how the year's weather will pan out. However, I've never found it to be that accurate.

Austin Maytham

Film of the Month

I recently watched *Pirates Of The Caribbean, On Stranger Tides*. I thought it was an excellent film and it included some famous people like Jonny Depp and Penelope Cruz. It is the fourth film starring Captain Jack Sparrow, and could possibly be the best one yet. Jack and his crew bump into Captain Barbosa, who was originally an enemy of Jack's, but gradually they start to get along. Another old friend of Jack's tags along too (Penelope Cruz) who Jack still has a few feelings for, but what Jack doesn't know is that her father is an evil pirate worse than Barbosa used to be. Jack and his crew go on a quest to find the Fountain of Youth, but someone else is searching for it too. Who could this be and most importantly who will get there first?



This is a film packed with adventure, excitement and a lot of laughs and I would strongly recommend it as a great family film. If you think you would enjoy this film, which you definitely will, it is now out on DVD!

Sophie Morgan
(Junior Reporter)

Feeding the birds

At this time of year, put out food and water on a regular basis. In severe weather, feed twice daily if you can: in the morning and in the early afternoon.



Birds require high energy (high fat) foods during the cold winter weather to maintain their fat reserves to survive the frosty nights. Use only good quality food and scraps.

Always adjust the quantity given to the demand, and never allow uneaten foods to accumulate around the feeders. Once you establish a feeding routine, try not to change it as the birds will become used to it and time their visits to your garden accordingly.

Big Garden Birdwatch

The Big Garden Birdwatch takes place at the end of January - it's easy to take part in, and your results will really help the RSPB.

All you need is a pen, a printout of the bird ID sheet reproduced in *Upton News*, and an hour to spend watching the birds in your garden, or local park, on either Saturday 28, or Sunday 29 January 2012.

Simply make a note of the highest number of each bird species seen on the ground (not flying over) at any one time, then visit www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch to report what you saw.

VPA News

I am looking at my garden, making brief forays to chop off bits of trailing honeysuckle which has detached from the fence, or filling the bird feeders, and then whisking back in for a warming cup of tea! Far too chilly to do anything out there! But I have noticed a few early flowers which shouldn't be out yet, Snowdrops and Grape Hyacinths, (Muscari), but all the other spring bulbs are popping up nicely too! I have noticed some daffs on London Road, and the Churchyard is lovely! Eileen and I are ready to impart our tips for success in entering the summer show, the schedule is well on its way, though as I write the print company is being difficult! You should be able to pick up the new schedule at this meeting, Wednesday 1st February, and be able to start planning your prize winning vegetables or photos, as the mood takes you! (Other categories are available too). The schedules will

also be available at the Post Office after this, or email me, karencbrooks@gmail.com and I will email one for you to print off at home!

The new programme is also available at the Post Office, and I think I need to remind you that everyone is automatically a member of the VPA, we can't be bothered to collect 50p off every house any more, so please come to the interesting talks and outings, and everyone is very welcome! You can all also borrow the tools etc for a very small fee. Joyce has the fertiliser distributor, long arm pruner, garden roller and the parrot bill secateurs, ring 850388. To borrow the lawn scarifier and electric blower/sucker ring Maggie or Austin on 850126. The Mantis cultivator and electric shredder are with Ken, 850836.

Happy Gardening

Karen Brooks

Restaurant Review

**Pierre Victoire,
Little Clarendon Street, Oxford**

Pierre Victoire has the style of a typical brasserie and is the antidote to the large chains which dominate the high street restaurants.

Good French food, and the lunch (Mon-Sat) is a bargain – £10.90 for 3 courses, with a choice which might include dishes such as moules, paté de porc, confit de canard, and pears

in red wine. The house wine is good and from memory less than £15. Fresh bread and a carafe of water are provided automatically in the French tradition, and the service is good and friendly. We visit frequently and have never been disappointed.

Brian Rippon

*Do you have a favourite restaurant?
Let us know about it...*

Blewbury WI

February kicks off quite literally, with Lyn and a walk to Didcot via West Hagbourne on Wednesday 1st, meet at the village hall at 10am, with stout shoes/boots, a bus pass if you are lucky enough to have one, and a few pennies for coffee and/or the bus home from one of the Hagbournes (she didn't say which one) but anyone welcome to join us! We have various outings this month, to see "The King and I" in Oxford, a tour of the Bodleian library, a science lecture with the Science Museum team, a talk on Norman Rockwell, an outing to see Snowdrops at Welford Park, a day of dance and our usual scrabble and Mah Jong evenings or afternoons.

Our main meeting is on Wednesday 22nd in the Vale room, 7.30pm, for "The 40 Years of Catching Smugglers", with Malcolm Nelson; Brenda Hopkins and Kathy Edmunds are our hostesses for the evening. All visitors welcome.

We also meet for our customary coffee at Style Acre Tea rooms on Tuesday 14th at 10.30 am. We send our best wishes to Joyce and Marie for a speedy recovery.

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

Ring Found

A ring has been found by one of the post boxes in Blewbury. If it is yours, or you know whose it is, please enquire at the Post Office.

LEAF Funding

(Local Energy Assessment Fund)

The government has just announced a £10 million funding pot which is open to community groups and parish councils but needs to be spent by 31st March 2012.

The fund is designed to help communities to accelerate their activity on energy and climate change. It can pay for energy surveys of buildings, energy saving demonstration projects (exemplar homes or community spaces), workshops to help local people take action to save energy, reports on what more needs to be done in your area (in the way of energy efficiency), engagement events ahead of the above studies to generate interest. Where the above has already been done the funding may be able to facilitate: area-wide renewable energy studies (to see what would work), feasibility studies into specific renewable energy projects.

The money is not available for installing technologies which would benefit from Feed in Tariffs or the Renewable Heat Incentive, but could be used for studies into whether those technologies would be suitable.

Further information can be found on the Department of Energy and Climate Change web site:

www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn11_107/pn11_107.aspx

Upton Wine Appreciation

Sherry and Italian wines

John Scarborough has now developed remarkable skills in providing us with an appealing range of tastes from the Sherry world. The first was actually not a sherry but a marsala, a Pellegrino Marsala Superiore DOC Denominazione di Origine Controllata, available from Waitrose £7.75 18%. This is an alluring drink, light but complex at the same time, useful in cooking and can be used as a dessert wine. The grapes Grillo Catarratto are harvested in September, aged for at least 2 years in oak casks and refined for at least 4 months in the bottle and then over to us.

The Hidalgo Pedro Ximenez Viejo 'Napoleon' Sherry - £12.99 Majestic 17% was a real revelation and a taste that I feel was quite unique and a wonderful find. This sherry appears almost black in colour is remarkably viscous and tastes of raisins molasses figs, caramel and nuts. It has prolonged length and sweetness and I would recommend for next Christmas, or any time really!

The Italian wine Teruzzi & Puthod Vernaccia, San Gimignano with the grape 100% Vernaccia, which was virtually saved from extinction by the wine maker Enrico Teruzzi, and is grown in Tuscany. I first sampled this wine over 10 years ago, as we holidayed in a villa just next to the vineyard and sampled the wine as it was sold on the road side. It has an elegant nose of apples and minerals, medium bodied, a bit of a Chablis finish. You can now buy this wine from Waitrose, at £8.99.



The Torre del Falco, made from the Nero di Troia grape a native grape of Puglia, that last bit of Italy at the very southern tip. I have to admit to a bit of a cheat on this wine as I was watching Saturday Kitchen, and this was one of the wines that they tried and raved about, so off I went to buy. The wine is from Waitrose normally around £7.00, mine was on offer for £5.00 13% so a bargain. I found the wine quite complex and full flavoured, according to the experts it should be drunk young as it does not age well, the one we tried was a 2007. Still young in my eyes.

Chris Traynor



BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH

28-29 JANUARY 2012

How to use this sheet

1. Record the highest number of each species you saw at any one time during your birdwatch (see example for instructions).
2. If you see species not listed on this sheet, record them on another sheet of paper.
3. Submit your results at www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch - thanks for taking part.

PLEASE DON'T SEND US THIS SHEET!
Use this sheet to help with your birdwatch. Then visit our website at www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch to submit your results. Please don't send this sheet to the RSPB - it will cost us money and we won't be able to count your results. Just pop this sheet in the recycling. Thank you.

Example

If you see two blue tits at the same time, colour one and two.



If you then see four blue tits together, colour up to four, not six.



If later you see three blue tits, stay at four. Do not go up to seven.



Blackbird

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Blue tit

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Carrion crow

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Chaffinch

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Coal tit

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Collared dove

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Dunnock

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Feral pigeon

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Goldfinch

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Great tit

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Greenfinch

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House sparrow

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Jackdaw

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Long-tailed tit

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Magpie

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Robin

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Song thrush

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Starling

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Woodpigeon

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Wren

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