

UPTON NEWS

March 2008

Vol 3 No. 13

ST MARY'S CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 2 March – 10.00 am Mothering Sunday – All Age Family Service, followed by refreshments.
Sunday 9 March – 9.00 am Sung Eucharist
Sunday 16 March – 9.00 am Morning Worship
Friday 21 March – 10.00 am Good Friday – All Age Family Service, followed by refreshments
Sunday 23 March – 9.00 am Easter Day – Sung Eucharist
Sunday 30 March – 9.00 am Sung Eucharist

UPTON METHODIST CHURCH

Services commence at 10:30am

2nd March Brenda Boyer
9th March Rev. Martin Smithson
16th March Michael Howlett (Blewbury Methodists will be joining us)
23rd March Rev. Helen White
Easter Sunday Service at Blewbury Methodist Church at 10:30 am.
30th March Alan Fudge

UPTON LADIES COVEN

The next meeting of the Upton Ladies Coven will be at the George and Dragon on Thursday 6th March at the earlier time of 7pm for a meal for those who would prefer not to cook that evening. Everyone welcome whether they want to join us for a meal or just come along for a drink as usual.

UPTON OIL SYNDICATE

If you would like to be included in the March delivery please let me know by Sat 8th March.
Colin Batchelor (851362)

UPTON VILLAGE THEATRE GROUP

The latest offers are for outings to "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" at the New Theatre on 3 June at 7.30 pm and to "Love's a Luxury" (billed as a glorious comedy) at the dinner theatre at The Mill at Sonning on 31 July. Starring in "Joseph" are the winner and runner-up of the TV programme.

There are a few seats left for both at the time of writing.

"Joseph" costs £22.50 per person including minibus transport; Sonning is £37.50 each, including complimentary programme and compulsory meal. The minibus is available for July, too, but I haven't yet been given a price, and it would be economical only if we filled the bus.

Do let me know if you are interested in joining us, or if you would like to be put on our mailing list.

Malcolm Wright

POST OFFICE HOURS

Post Office Opening Hours for 17th to 28th March

Monday 17 th	-	5:15 – 6:15 pm
Tuesday 18 th	-	5:15 – 6:15 pm
Wednesday 19 th	-	2:15 – 4:15 pm
Thursday 20 th	-	2:00 – 5:00 pm
Then:		
Monday 24 th	-	Closed
Tuesday 25 th	-	2:00 – 5:00 pm
Wednesday 26 th	-	1:00 – 3:00 pm
Thursday 27 th	-	2:00 – 5:00 pm

Sorry for any inconvenience.
Margaret Maytham

PARISH COUNCIL

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 11th March at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall

Annual Village Meeting

The annual village meeting will be held on Tuesday 8th April at 7.30 in the Village Hall.

Please come along to hear of the progress made on the extension to the village hall and to let your Parish Council know what you would like them to do for your community in the coming 12 months.

Litter Pick

The date for this year's Litter Pick is Saturday 15 March. Meet at the Village Hall for a hot drink at 9.30 before setting off to clear the litter at 10.00. Gloves, fluorescent vests and claws will be provided.

Footpath

On behalf of all the residents of the village and in particular those from the Chilton Road area may I thank Bill and his lads for their sterling work in providing the last link in the footpath alongside the A417. Bill has provided us with a path through the George and Dragon garden to improve the safety of all pedestrians both going walking and visiting the pub.

(A special note to Mr Savage of Round and About fame – the footpath finally goes somewhere).

Oxfordshire Public Transport Guide

Copies of Oxfordshire County Council's new public transport guide are now available. If you would like a copy please contact Clare on 850486.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Please be aware that sadly another burglary has occurred in Upton. This was at approx 10.30pm on the evening of Thursday 7th February at a dwelling in Church Street.

Many of you may have seen/heard the police helicopter flying over the village that night.

A handbag and some cash were stolen.

Anyone wishing to be added to my email list for circulation please contact me on

Celiaadavies@aol.com or 850684.

COLLECTION FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

29th March - 12th April

Its a very sad fact that last year's collection was necessary to provide 15,000 children under 16, who had been thrown out of home, with basic provisions, including warm clothing, toiletries and a blanket. It's hard to imagine children living on the streets.

A volunteer will be putting envelopes through each house, please be as generous as you can. If there is anyone who would like to help with the collection please let me know. Many hands make light work. Thank you. Clare Lightfoot 850486

WELCOME

We welcome David Hawkins and Sue Brown to the village.

David and Sue together with their Westie Calum have just moved into Upton Lodge Cottage from Cholsey. Both enjoy the outdoor life their interest being walking, biking, photography and bird-watching, they also enjoy flying a microlight.

We also welcome to the village, the Keeble family who have just moved from Wantage into Chynoweth, Church Street.

David and Alex have five children aged from 15 to 22. David is a Director for a paper company and Alex is a Business Manager working in Abingdon. With the children and all the jobs to do around a new house their time for hobbies is limited but both enjoy reading and getting out walking with their retired racer greyhound.

We hope they all have a long and enjoyable stay in the village.

UVHAT 50 CLUB

January Winners

£10 Mrs Denham	55
£ 7 Mrs Tibbets	171
£ 5 Mrs Morris	64
£ 4 Mrs Napper	70

POST OFFICE CLOSURE

A meeting was held in the village hall on Wednesday 13th February to discuss what can be done to save our local Post Office from closure. 58 residents attended the meeting with a further 20 apologies sent in.

The meeting was given facts and information relevant to the closure including that the Post Office are currently making a loss of £4 million per week of which our local branch is contributing approx 0.002%, a few 10s of pounds.

As part of the closure package the government have stated that 95% of people living in rural communities must remain within 3 miles of a Post Office access point. Upton has been told that it has two points within the limit. Blewbury is the nearest branch but to get to that branch taking into account the current bus service and the branch opening times will require a round trip taking 3 ½ hours and will require over a mile of walking between the bus stop and the post office. The alternative branch that comes within the 3 mile government guideline is the Cockcroft branch in Didcot to which there is no bus service.

It was agreed to organise a petition to be signed by as many residents as possible and to send copies to the Post Office, to our local M.P. and to the Prime Minister.

It was also agreed to ask as many residents as possible to write letters of protest to the Post Office and to their M.P. (See Below)

PROTEST LETTERS

You will see from the above we need as many residents as possible to send a letter to Post Office Ltd. protesting at the proposed closure of our Post Office. For those of you with cars especially those of you who work close to an alternative Post Office branch the closure may seem unimportant. We ask you to consider your neighbours who are dependant on public transport and to also consider that the fabric of the village will be further eroded by the loss of one of our few remaining services that to many is an important community service.

Please don't think it is a waste of your time to write a letter, the closure scheme is poorly thought out and is coming under very heavy criticism. According to figures made available to us the program appears more likely to increase the current Post Office loss than to decrease it.

To assist anyone who is prepared to send in a letter we have made available copies of a fact sheet and a sample letter that you can pick up in the post office or you can find on our website.

Letters must be with the Post Office by 16th March. The address to send your letter is in the leaflet 'Proposed Branch Closures' that has been delivered to every house in the village.

Please spare a few minutes to do your bit to try to save our branch and please also sign the petition that is being taken round the village.

UPTON WINE CLUB

The Upton wine club had its usual monthly get together on the 20th of Feb. the meeting was well attended by the great and not so good of Upton. The topic was, **A ramble through the Southern Rhone by Sarah Eccles**. The talk and tasting were very interesting, we managed to work our way through 10 wines, such a chore, but as usual we managed with great efficiency, and got to the end by 10pm.

The Rhone is interesting as it winds its way through, steep hills rising up from the river in the north to the flat and rolling fields of the south. The wines are predominately red; Grenache being the grape variety, mainly grown in the region, but nearly always blended. We did manage to taste a couple of whites, of which there were mixed reviews. The reds however were very good and hit the spot, there was one mishap as one of the bottles of the most expensive wine of the evening was corked. Due to a steady hand and a good eye we all managed to get a drop to taste, from the one good bottle, without blood being spilt.

As usual the evening becomes more social after the first few wines and the noise level rises. Sarah having been to us before had brought along a microphone which enabled her to talk above the tumult. Needless to say fun was had by all, and knowledge gained, and only one glass broken in the ensuing washing up.

The talks for the coming months :

March Odds and Sods, Mike Collins
April Wines of Bordeaux, Simon Powell
May Wines of Australia, Derek Whitemell.

We meet every third Wednesday, apart from July and August

If you may like to join us, at £5 a shot it is very good value and fun please, contact Fiona Betts-851001, or Mike Collins- 850989.

Chris Traynor.

GEORGE AND DRAGON

We had a great time on Burn's Night. Special thanks to Mr. Larry Brown, the evening's master of ceremonies, who succeeded in keeping everybody entertained with his rendition of Robert Burn's poetry and live accordion playing! As usual, our diners were very generous with their compliments. Not a Haggis was left untouched!

I wish I could say the same thing about Valentine's Dinner though. We were still busy on the night but only half the numbers booked ahead, the other half were walk-ins. Still, we should count ourselves lucky as we expected trade to slow right down after the Christmas Holidays but it didn't until much later in February. It wouldn't surprise me that people are staying away because of the freezing winter nights of late. So...c'mon Spring! The sun always draws people out and into the George and Dragon! We are always hopeful.

March will be quite busy with Mothering Sunday and Easter Sunday all in the same month! Sundays are usually very busy anyway so if you're planning to come to the pub on any of those days, please make sure to book as it's always best to do so.

Personally, I'm very excited for April as we are going to have a very grand celebration on St. George Day! If we can't celebrate this day at the George and Dragon, where else can we? I haven't got all the details yet but it should be ready by next month's newsletter. Watch this space!

Bill has just finished the footpath! In fact, by the time you receive this month's newsletter, it would've been completely finished and open to the public. We're happy that the project is finally completed because it means walkers and wheelchairs are now off the road and safe when they come to the pub or even if they're just passing through.

Finally, is there anyone out there interested in playing for our Aunt Sally Team? Season will start in April, matches every Wednesday night. We are also calling out for any Crib players for a social Crib Night every Wednesday from 9pm. Just show up on the night if you fancy a game. See you soon!

OPEN GARDENS 2008 – Upton

Now that the bulbs are peeping through and the nights are getting a bit lighter, I wondered if anyone was interested in another *Open Gardens* in Upton in the summer? You will recall that we did this in late June 2005, had 10 gardens open and provided delicious teas accompanied by some singing and a couple of plant stalls. We raised an amazing £2k which went to the village hall fund. It is a great focus to get your garden tidied and do all those outside jobs you have been meaning to do for some time!

Please let me know if you are interested in:

- a) opening your garden
- b) being on the organising committee
- c) helping a bit nearer the time with some of the administration
- d) stewarding or serving teas on the day

If we have sufficient interest, we will definitely go ahead and get a date in the diary which doesn't clash with other village events or local open gardens and then plan our first meeting. Whilst the organising committee will determine the beneficiary of the monies raised, it is likely to be for the benefit of the village. Last time we had a few committee meetings - which weren't too onerous, a bit of intensive gardening and an enjoyable time looking round each other's gardens the evening before.

Sarah Sayers
Email: sarahpsayers@btinternet.com
01235 851450

SOBELL HOUSE DONATION

A big thank you to everyone who uses the photocopying facilities at the Benefice Centre and who have, in return, been placing donations in the Sobell House collecting box there. When the box was recently emptied, it had over £90 in it, a very useful sum for which the Charity are extremely grateful.

Beryl Hill
Lay Pastor

WHY SHOULD YOU BE A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

School governors make up one of the largest bodies of volunteers in England and Wales. Governors are people who have an interest in the role of schools in society and wish to make a positive contribution to their communities. The law requires every state school to have a governing body, which is made up of people who represent the many partners in state education - including parents, teachers, the local authority, the Church and the community. Its task is to oversee the running of the school.

Since they represent these many partners, school governors come from every walk of life –industry, education, home-makers, public services, manual jobs and the professions. At Blewbury primary school we are looking to recruit new governors to represent the wider community, as some of our longer serving members are retiring. We shall also be holding elections shortly for an additional parent governor. We are particularly keen to recruit someone with finance/accountancy or with public sector management experience to strengthen the spread of skills within the governing body, and to recruit some older and some younger governors so that we better represent our community.

What you would need to do as a governor

Governors need to attend meetings. Blewbury School governing body for example holds 5-6 full governing body meetings a year during a school term evening or late afternoon. New governors will be invited to join one of the committees to which some of the work of the governing body is delegated - often the committee that matches their work or home skills.

As a governor, you must work as members of the governing body for the best interests of the school. You will contribute to strategic planning, be a critical friend to the school (i.e support and challenge the school), and ensure accountability This involves asking questions on a range of matters, perhaps when you are visiting the school, attending an open evening or during a meeting. It also means contributing your opinions to the discussions of the governing body and accepting the majority view, which may not always reflect your own opinion. You are expected to represent the views of those who appointed or elected you.

You must show an interest in school activities. This means the everyday work of the school as well as special events. Every Blewbury governor is encouraged to visit the school (by prior arrangement) during working hours at least once year.

Governors do receive training in their roles. Oxfordshire County Council Governor Services provides a range of training, starting with a basic induction course introducing you to your new role as a school governor. These are run at various time including evenings and weekends to suit different people's availability.

And finally – we do have fun, and we do make a difference to our local school and our local children and their families. Are you interested in finding out more? Contact Kathryn Fletcher, Chair of Governors on 851490 (home), or c/o Blewbury School, Westbrook Street.

VILLAGE PRODUCE ASSOCIATION

Dr Brett Rolands, a chiropractor from Wantage gave us fascinating talk on how to look after our backs, shoulders and hips whilst bashing about in the garden or allotment! He also gave us good tips on what to do with a £50 pound note, you really should have been there!

A few of us ventured over to Swyncombe church a couple of weekends ago to see the snowdrops, they were totally stunning, and the tea and cake delicious! We have decided that at each VPA talk evening, we will try to arrange a mini trip out to see a garden, but in order to be included; you need to come to the talk! That leads me neatly into the next talk, which is from our friendly photography judge Eric Jenkins, he is talking about photography, how to take smashing pictures, composition, lighting etc, the talk is on Wednesday 5th March, at 7.30pm in the vale room, Blewbury.

Memberships are now due; someone will be around to collect from you soon, if we miss you, please come to Blewbury or Upton Post Offices, £3 for un-retired, £1 for retired persons.

Happy gardening
Karen Brooks

JIGSAWS

There are a number of Jigsaws available for you to borrow to keep you occupied during the winter months - contact Austin Maytham 850364.

We have quite a few people who share, and some from Didcot; so quite a variety

VILLAGE DROP-IN SESSIONS

The next three sessions are scheduled for:
6 March, 20 March and 3 April – 10.30 until 12.00 noon.

If anybody has a mobility problem please give me a ring as we might be able to help.

We would welcome your ideas as to what else could be included in the drop-in sessions. So if you have some views, please don't keep them to yourself – come and discuss them with either myself or one of the other helpers. No guarantees that we can oblige but all ideas will be considered.

We look forward to seeing you on 6 March.

Yvonne Collins 01235 850989

SOUTH AND VALE CARERS CENTRE

Have you time to spare to meet someone new and help them?

South and Vale Carers Centre in Didcot are starting a new project and are looking for volunteers. Would you be interested in helping out someone caring for a relative in their own home? You would be introduced to a household where the carer and the cared for person are living, and asked to stay in the home while the carer took some time off; perhaps an hour a month perhaps an afternoon a week. Chris Elliot is waiting to hear from anyone interested and has much more information to give. Please contact her on chris@svcarers.org.uk or 01235 510212 if you are interested.

MUSIC IN THE ABBEY

The Orchestra of St John's and OSJ Voices, under their conductor John Lubbock, return to Dorchester Abbey to perform Bach's powerful meditation on the story of the betrayal, arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Performed without an interval, this performance in the beauty and grandeur of Dorchester Abbey promises to be a stunning, moving and inspiring occasion.

The work is being performed in English, in a translation by the Chorus Master of OSJ, Jeremy Jackman.

6.30pm Friday 21 March 2008, Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon

Ticket Prices: A £25; B £18 (£15); C £14 (£12)

By Phone

Tickets Oxford T: 01865 305305

9.30am-6.30pm Mon – Sat

10.00am-6.30pm Wed

By Internet

www.ticketsoxford.com

In Person

Tickets Oxford, The Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX12 2LW

Items for inclusion in the April issue to be sent to kameki39@btinternet.com, or handed in to Cathy or Mike by Wednesday 26th March.

Printed at the Duck House, Blewbury.

Delivery organised by Jessie West

Date for your diary – Skittle and Supper Evening, April 12th

Theatre Group – Tickets for Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat have sold out.