

UPTON NEWS

December 2008

Vol 3 No. 22

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL

RECTORS REFLECTIONS

Carol Singers from Mars

Well, it's that time of year again. Mince pies, carols, cards, and good will to all! There are so many wonderful things associated with



Christmas. Every year we insist on marking the season, and end up doing all sorts of Christmassy things – or wish we were doing all sorts of Christmassy things, if only we had a bit more money, or if only our minds did not dwell on Christmases past, enjoyed with loved ones who are no longer with us. But among all this seasonal activity, I wonder whether we ever give ourselves the opportunity to ponder what it's all about. If a bunch of Martian carol singers rang your doorbell one evening and asked you to explain the meaning of Christmas, what would you say?

It would certainly be a challenge. So let me suggest an answer to give to those inquisitive Martians. Christmas is above all, about hope. Hope placed not in fallible human beings, but hope placed in God's all powerful and never changing love for us and for all His creation. We hear about this hope in the bible readings read at carol services, and in the words of the carols themselves. We share this hope when we light candles, and let their light shine in the darkness.

Christmas is about hope because Jesus is about hope. The fact that God decided to take human flesh and live as one of us shows us how much he cares for us. It also means that God understands what it means to be a human being. He understands human life from the inside, with all its complexities and all its simplicities, with all its joys and with all its sorrows. As human

beings, we should never let ourselves think that God doesn't care, or that God doesn't understand. If that were the case, why would God have bothered to live a human life, confined by the constraints of time and space, amid the dirt and poverty of First Century Palestine? Life would have been so much nicer for Him if He had stayed put in Heaven.

The birth of Jesus was just the beginning of a new unfolding of God's gift of hope. For through Jesus' death and resurrection, we have been given the hope of peace with God, and a new life, eternal life. This eternal life can be grasped in part in the life we lead here on earth, but we can only experience it in all its fullness after we die. Sometime in the future, at a time of God's own choosing, the gift of hope, which began with Jesus' birth, will have come to its full fruition. There will be nothing more to hope for, because the whole of the Universe will know God's love, joy and peace in all their fullness.

So hope is what it's all about, hope in God's love for us, hope made visible in a baby in a manger, hope made audible in a baby's cries...And if you do happen to meet some Martians, do invite them to our carol services – I hear that Martians enjoy a good sing, especially at this time of year. They are also partial to the odd mince pie.

Fr Jason

CONGRATULATIONS

To Freddie and Mary Gutfreund on celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary on November 22nd

ST MARY'S CHURCH
Services for December

7th December 9.00 a.m. - Sung Eucharist
14th December 9.00 a.m. - Sung Eucharist
21st December 9.00 a.m. - Sung Eucharist
24th December - CHRISTMAS EVE - 4.00 p.m.
- Crib & Carol Service
25th December - CHRISTMAS DAY - 9.00 a.m.
Sung Eucharist
28th December 9.00 a.m. - Sung Eucharist
4th January 9.00 a.m. - Sung Eucharist

Please note that St Mary's is being redecorated week commencing 5th January and will therefore be closed for services for most of January. Please watch the notices on the church gate for updates on progress.

Clare Lightfoot

UPTON METHODIST CHURCH
Services commence at 10:30am

7th December Pam Martin
14th December Rev. Helen White
Carols and Holy Communion
Blewbury Methodists will be joining us.
21st December No Service in Upton
We are invited to the Carol Service at Blewbury Methodist Church **Starts at 3 pm.**
25th December No Service in Upton
Holy Communion at **9am** at Blewbury Methodist Church
28th December Rev. Martin Smithson
Blewbury Methodists will be joining us.
4th January Brenda Boyer

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

Thank you once again for your generous donations to this annual appeal, £327 was raised. Each year the total increases and for a small village it is an amazing amount.

Many thanks to all the collectors for their time.

Helen Weston.

BLEWBURY SCHOOL
Schools International Eco Charter

In October, as part of the Comenius Life Learning Project (funded by the British Council), six pupils from Blewbury School travelled to South West France where they were joined by pupils from France, Sweden, Poland and the Czech Republic.

The Comenius project's aim is to promote cohesion and understanding between European countries. This year the children met to present ideas of actions that could be made to help make our world more sustainable. Each country presented five ideas which the children discussed, questioned and ranked in order of importance. They then very democratically decided on the five agreed aims to take back to all the schools. They wanted to harvest water, cut down on wastage of paper, recycle a greater variety of materials, waste less food in dining halls and wear warmer clothes before turning up the heating.

We will all work on these and see if they make a difference to our energy usage.

VILLAGE DROP-IN SESSIONS

Dates for your diary

Our last Drop-in session before Christmas will be on Thursday, 11 December at the usual time of 10.30. After the Christmas break our next session will be on the 8 January.

If anyone has a mobility problem please give me a ring. We may be able to help – especially if you could let me know the day before.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yvonne Collins 01235 850989

UPTON LADIES COVEN

The Upton Ladies Coven will be holding their Xmas Meal in the George & Dragon at 7pm on Thursday 4th December for those who would like to join us.....everyone welcome.....please let Maggie know on Tel 850126

PARISH COUNCIL

Stuart Norman has been elected as Vice Chairman of the Council following the resignation of Belinda Drew.

Planning Applications

UPT/18307/3 A 2 storey family house at No 1 Beeching Close has been approved despite Parish Council objections.

UPT/20226/1 Two Chalet bungalows on the site of Hitherto, Church Street have been approved despite Parish Council objections.

UPT8232/4 A summer house at Manor Lawns, High Street has been approved.

UPT/17100/1 Plans for the modification to the rear of Stocks, Stream Road have been submitted. The Parish Council has no objections.

Parish Transport Representatives.

Peter and Juliet Gardner have resigned after acting as our parish transport representatives for the last 9 years. We thank them for all their efforts over those years and in particular thank them for their persistence in working to keep our bus service at its present level.

Energy Forum

The Parish Council is very keen to set up an Energy Forum that would obtain and pass on to parishioners information on practical ways in which they can save energy and save on energy costs. Many of the local villages already have such an organisation and I am sure you will have read about their activities so there is plenty of advice on what can be achieved. The Parish Council is looking for up to 3 willing volunteers to set up and run the forum, the Parish Council will cover all costs.

If you are prepared to help us out with this idea please give me a call.

Village Stream

The local water table is high and the stream is expected to appear any day up towards Chilton. Please could all residents who have the stream running through their properties, particularly the residents of Prospect Road who are responsible for the stream at the back of their properties, ensure that gullies and the stream bed are clear.
Mike Brown 850135

GEORGE AND DRAGON

It's that time of the year again! It seems like not so long ago we celebrated our very first Christmas at the George and Dragon and now we're doing it again. That is a very good sign considering how the credit crunch is affecting us all, we are truly grateful to our loyal customers for their unending support. These are truly trying times for us but we still have a lot of good reasons to soldier on and hopefully we will see this through with not a lot of pain!

Anyway, please take note of our special days for the Christmas season.

Christmas and New Year's Day:

Open 12-2.30 for drinks only.

Closed in the evening.

Dec 29 and Jan 5: Closed all day.

Dec 31: Open all day for drinks only.

We are hoping to book our favourite entertainer for New Year's Eve but we are yet to get confirmation from him. We'll definitely put posters up as soon as we know what we're doing for our New Year's Eve party.

Finally, from our family to yours, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

UVAT 50 Club

Winners for October 2008

£10 Ms Spackman 123

£7 Mr Batchelor 46

£5 Mrs Granger 126

£4 Mrs Dickens 149

Winners for November 2008

£10 Mrs Bibby 118

£7 Mrs Lott 114

£5 Mrs Gardner 111

£4 Mrs J Napper 70

NOVEMBER WINE CLUB MEETING

It was nice to see Ian Hewson of the Wine Man Ltd, Streatly on Thames, again at the wine club. This has now become an annual event and a very welcome one. He was introducing us to some new ideas on wine for Christmas, and his choices were indeed interesting. Especially the Scharzhofberger Riesling 2003

Bischofliche Mosel. Ian recommends this light wine as an aperitif before dinner, low alcohol content is always useful if you still have dinner to finish, especially in my case.

The other remarkable wine of the evening was the Central Otago Pinot Noir 2006 Wild Earth, from New Zealand this was the most glorious wine I have tasted in a while. Smooth complex and very satisfying on the pallet, several of us went away a few pence lighter, despite the credit crunch, but looking forward to Christmas!!

The next wine club meeting is on SPARKLING WINES, so we hope to see plenty of villagers to enjoy this fun evening.

Chris Traynor

VILLAGE HALL EXTENSION

The funds have benefited from two events during November.

- The 1st Upton and Blewbury Brownie Pack contributed £100 which they raised at a coffee evening for parents and friends. This was remarkable effort.

- There was a net surplus from the pantomime Hansel and Gretel of £135.

Contributions this year now total £3606. In addition 45 people have promised to contribute £5555 once we know that building can commence.

Brian Simpson.

DIARY DATES

Friday 5th December, 2-4pm Blewbury School Christmas Fair

School Hall – Carols, Mince Pies & Mulled Wine

Blewbury Village Hall – Santa’s Grotto, Tombola, Raffles, Kids Games, Cake and other Stalls, Refreshments, Crafts made by Children, Christmas Shopping, Body Shop, Pampered Chef, Barefoot Books, Phoenix Cards, Keepsakes, Aromatherapy, Jewellery, Usborne Books, Photo Restoration, Art and much, much more

Saturday 13th December 6-8pm Upton Children’s Christmas Party

For children of Upton aged 2 – 11 years
Disco, food, games and lots more....
Funded by UVHAT

To reserve a place please contact:
Lindsay 851222 or Andrea 850460

A special visit from Father Christmas is expected so reserve your place early to avoid disappointment!!

UPTON CHURCH FETE PLANT STALL

Gardeners will be taking hardwood cuttings right now. Please could you take a few extra, the plant stall team would be delighted to receive shrubs and plants for next September’s stall. Anyone willing to contribute may contact Edwin Abbot on 850686

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Delivery organised by Jessie West

Items for inclusion in the January issue to be sent to kameki39@btinternet.com. or handed in to Cathy or Mike by 26th December