

Upton News



Vol 5 No. 9 April 2017

My news-gatherer has done a good job this month and we have a bumper edition of 16 pages for you.

Two items of real interest to us are the achievements of David Murphy and the efforts of Karen and Angela in raising cash for good causes, if any other parishioners have similar stories please come forward and tell us about them. You don't need to write up a contribution we are quite happy to collect the information and do the rest.

On page 16 you will see a note on the possible introduction of small scale advertising, if any of you have an opinion on this matter or any other subject affecting the parish we would like your views, we will not publish them without your permission so feel free to express your thoughts to news@uptonvillage.co.uk

Lucy

St. Mary's Church Services

Sun 2nd April—9.00am - Sung Eucharist*

Sun 9th April—9.00am - Sung Eucharist for Palm Sunday

Sun 16th April—9.00am - Easter Day Eucharist

Sun 23rd April—10.30am - All Age Service for St. George's Day*

Sun 30th April—9.00am - Morning Prayer

Please see the porch notice for weekday services.

* Refreshments follow these services.

Alan Davies (14/2/57 - 25/2/17)

Celia, Alex and Steph would like to thank everyone for their recent kindness and support since the sudden death of Alan.

We have been overwhelmed by the many flowers, cards and messages. The attendance in church at his recent funeral was truly heart-warming.

Donations are being collected in Alan's memory for Thames Valley Air Ambulance, (T.V.A.A.), a charity which Alan supported annually with his band.

Donations can be given via M and J Didcock Funeral Directors at www.didcotfuneraldirectors.co.uk or direct to the family.

Rector's Note



An Unusual Word

Do you like unusual words? Perhaps you are a Scrabble player and have a whole stock of them! Well, how about this for an unusual word: Triduum.

Who, or what, is a triduum, you might well wonder. Well, it's a word for a period of three days, usually found in connection with the celebration of Easter.

Ever since earliest times, Christians have felt that the celebration of Easter involves three distinct stages. There's Good Friday, when we remember Jesus' trial, death and burial. There's Holy Saturday, when Jesus' body lay in the tomb. And then there's Easter Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

These three days mark the Easter Triduum.

At one level, the three days of the Easter Triduum simply recall the three days of Jesus' death and resurrection. But at a deeper level, these three days resonate with different ways in which we can experience the passing of time, and what it feels like to be alive.

Sometimes, life is hard and full of pain. We can feel that we are on trial, and that we are being judged. Perhaps we feel helpless, mere pawns in the hands of the more powerful. On days like this, our thoughts might easily turn towards Good Friday.

On other days, there's a spring in our step and everything is going well. There's a sense of a new beginning, and new hope for the future. On days like this we can feel the joy of Easter Sunday.

And then there are those days when nothing much seems to be happening. It's simply just another day, an ordinary day. Perhaps we might be waiting for something, or perhaps not. In any event, there's nothing particularly special going on. It is a Holy Saturday sort of day.

Wherever we would place ourselves at the moment - Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday - God is with us. Each of these distinct days had a place, a necessary place, in God's plan for Jesus. And what is true for Jesus, is true also for us.

In times of sadness; in times of joy; in ordinary times - God is with us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. God is there for us, and with us.

Have a blessed Triduum!

Fr Jason

Drop In

The Drop-In is an informal gathering to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a pleasant chat. Meetings take place in the Village Hall on Thursdays from 10.30am to 12.00pm. Dates for April are the 13th and the 27th.

The George and Dragon

With the arrival of spring and hopefully some warmth and sunshine, we hope that you will come and join us for some of our planned events, a meal, or just a drink during April.

On Thursday April the 6th “The Coven” will be visiting. For anybody new to the village, on the first Thursday of the month ladies from, or with connections to Upton, come for a meal and a chat.

The day after, Friday the 7th, the Easter Holidays start as many of the local schools break up, and if we have sunny weather we will no doubt have a garden full of happy families enjoying their time.

The Easter weekend kicks off on Thursday 13th with the Darts House Cup, which is open to all, please pop in beforehand to register if you would like an entertaining start to your break from work! On Bank holiday weekends our kitchen is open 12.00–3.00pm and 6.00–9.00pm on Fridays and Mondays, 12.00–9.00pm on Saturdays, 12.00–7.00pm on Sundays, when our popular traditional roasts are available as well as our extensive menu. We can be very busy and we advise booking a table in advance in order to avoid disappointment.

The following week, includes St George’s Day. Having celebrated Burn’s Night and St David’s Day with special menus this year, we are doing something different, on Saturday 22nd, the kitchen will be closed all day and we have “The Unbelievables” band playing in the evening.

The last weekend in April is another bank holiday weekend. The kitchen hours are the same as over the Easter weekend, but we have another band playing on the evening of Sunday 30th April. They are called “Nameless” and perform classic rock covers, everybody is welcome to come and enjoy free live music with us.

On cooler days we will continue to light our wood burner to welcome you, we open at midday daily and are open all day. To reserve a table, please phone on 850723 during opening hours or pop in. Kenny, Jo and the staff are there to help you enjoy your visit to your village pub, and we appreciate your continued support.

Raising Money for Good Causes

The Upton News is very pleased to publicise the efforts of two of our parishioners who are putting in a lot of effort to raise cash for very worthwhile charities.

Following on from her success in raising over £600 for Sobell House by completing her Winter Walk, Karen Spackman from Prospect Road has undertaken two more fund raising events in March.

During a visit to the children's ward at the JR Hospital, Karen met young William, a charming little boy with a super smile, and very special needs which mean that he lives in the JR along with his mum and 3 year old sister. Karen agreed to join a group who together with William and his family formed 'Team William' to run in the Oxford Mail OX5 Run at Blenheim Palace on March 26th. Karen, who has always dreaded the thought of running, has been training since January and has recently been running 5km at Didcot Parkrun every Saturday morning. Unfortunately for Karen the OX5 was 5 miles rather than 5km plus a few hills so it was probably tough going. She is now considering her future as a runner!

If you would like to support Karen's effort to help the fantastic work funding additional state-of-the-art medical equipment and better facilities for the young patients at the Children's Hospital the link for giving is:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Karen-Spackman4>.

Karen's second venture has been to be part of the fund raising scheme called "Walk All Over Cancer", walking 10,000 Steps a day during March in support of Cancer Research UK. Cancer research is a charity very close to Karen's heart as she lost both of her parents to the disease. 10,000 steps equates to about 5 miles so it is no mean feat to complete that distance every day. Over the first 3 weeks of March she managed over 250,000 steps or 110 miles according to the app on her phone! The link for donating is:

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/karen-spackman-10000-steps>

If you are supporting either charity on-line please include gift aid if you are a tax payer as that adds an extra 20% to the donation.

The third fundraising activity requires you to get active but you have a few weeks to prepare. Angela Burt from White Cottage, Fieldside is organising a Zumbathon which will take place on Saturday 6th May between 14:00 and 17:00 pm at Williams F1, Station Road, Grove, OX12 0DQ. The Zumbathon is a three hour dance session to Latin inspired music that is open to everyone whether you are a keen dancer or just want to give it a try. Everyone is very welcome to go along whether you want to dance for 3 minutes or 3 hours. More information is available by emailing zumbathon2017@gmail.com,

Admittance is by ticket only, £5 per adult, £3 per child (13 years and under) available from Angela or by contacting the email address above. Proceeds will be split between the charities MND (Motor Neurones Disease), Special Effect and SIA (Spinal Injuries Association). Refreshments, cake stalls and a raffle will be available on the day so please take along some extra pennies.

Bake Up

There was a fine turnout for the second Upton baking social on March 24th. The theme was 'tarts' and we tasted a panoply of pastry-based goodies, both savoury and sweet.

A humdinger of a pissaladiere took centre stage, and other onion fillings proved popular in the savoury section. Spanakopita and cheese and tomato slice were also devoured with gusto.

In the sweet department we had lemon curd tarts, rhubarb and almond, apple slice and Swedish nut pie.

One audacious recipe dispensed with pastry altogether and used bacon for a base with an egg, bacon and cheese filling. Breakfast in a bite!

If you have a yen to bake (not competitively) the next meet-up is on Friday May 12 at 11.00am at Fieldfare near the church.

The theme is quite simply 'cake'. Do come along and don't forget some Tupperware for the divvy up.

Kieron Humphrey

Village Produce Association

Our 'Members Talks' which took place at Blewbury Manor Barn in March were enjoyed by everyone who attended. Thank you to the Manor for the use of the Barn with its lovely big settees in front of the great log burner.

Our next event is our visit to BBC Gardeners'World Live at the NEC Birmingham on Saturday June 17th. BBC Gardeners' World Live presents much loved features every year, plus a host of new features to keep the show fresh and exciting.

Carol Klein will share expert advice in the Live Theatre plus live interviews and book signings. There will be over a 100 places to shop for plants.

Tickets, which includes entry to the BBC Good Food Show, are available from Karen at Blewbury Post Office or from Maggie Maytham at Upton at a cost of £23.50.

Don't miss out on a great day - order your ticket by 15th May. Travel arrangements and cost will be sorted out later.

***DID YOU KNOW?** James Boswell (1740-95) wrote: "In an orchard there should be enough to eat, enough to lay up, enough to be stolen and enough to rot on the ground."*

Happy Gardening, Eileen

5-A-Side Kick Around

We are looking to get a few people together for a weekly 5-a-side kick around; we are not skilled experts, far from it, more just to get together for a bit of exercise and fun. Likely early in the week, from 8.00pm for an hour, somewhere nearby. Send me an email if you're interested:

john_haworth@hotmail.com

David's Achievements

David Murphy from Prospect Road has recently been enjoying outstanding success on the International swimming scene. David, now 18, has in the last 18 months reaped well-earned reward for the dedicated training that he has put in since the age of 8.

He currently trains for 17 hours a week in the water and 4 hours on land or in the gym. He attends training 6 nights and 2 mornings throughout the season. In addition to his regular program he also attends extra special sessions, like training in a 50m pool, and attends training camps at weekends and at half term. In addition to all the training David also takes part in a weekend swimming gala at least once a month. Doing homework in a hotel and eating in the car are a way of life. Somehow he fits all of this into an already packed academic work schedule where he is currently doing 3 A2s.

David's success really began to take off in November 2015 at the Winter Nationals where he won gold in all his breaststroke events, this qualified him for the SE Regional team and took him to his first international event in Geneva in January 2016 where he won the gold medal in the 200m breaststroke. He was then selected by England to compete in Italy in April where he claimed a silver and 2 bronze medals in his three breaststroke events.

At the Olympic trials also in April 2016 in Glasgow he was the top junior in the 100m breaststroke which qualified him for his first major GB international, the European Junior Championships in Hungary in July. David picked up two bronze medals in coming third in both the 100m breaststroke and the medley relay. Although not placed in the race, his 50m breaststroke time was an English and British Age group record. Also in July, David competed in the British Nationals where he won gold in the 50m and 100m and silver in the 200m breaststroke and as a result was selected for a national training camp in Aberdeen. From that training camp, David was selected by British Swimming for a place in their World Class program and is now receiving funding in the target Tokyo cohort.

In December David was selected to represent GB in a junior international in Ontario where he won gold in the 100m breaststroke and in January he again represented GB this time in Austin, Texas.

In February David was voted Young Sportsman of the Year for Oxfordshire.

David's next target is to progress through to the Summer British Championships where if successful he will compete in the men's section against the best of this country's international swimmers.

We congratulate you David on your brilliant achievements and we also congratulate your parents for their incredible efforts in supporting you. Through all those early years for every hours training there was a parent hour sitting watching and for every mile of travelling to training and events there was a parent mile driving and let us not forget they put in the same effort for older brother Alex who was also good enough to set many junior records.

Swop Shop

Items

- 1) Sony 17 inch colour TV - Swop for £20 - available from Heather Saysell Hsaysel1@its.jnj.com
- 2) Electric white panel heater - Free - available from Heather Saysell Hsaysel1@its.jnj.com
- 3) Horse Manure - Free - available from Hilary Powell 850268. After contacting Hilary it can be collected by wheelbarrow or trailer from the field at the bottom of High Street.
- 4) 320cm wide Electric Markilux Patio Awning with remote - Free but needs uninstalling - available from Kieron Humphrey kieronhumph@gmail.com
- 5) Piano and Piano Stool - well maintained but needs tuning - Free, see below.
- 6) Mahogany Corner Display Cabinet 116cms tall. Crack in one glass panel - Free, see below.
- 7) Black Office Swivel Chair with arms - Free, see below.
- 8) IKEA Black Office Corner Unit - Free, see below.
- 9) Electric Mattress Pillow Raiser, excellent condition - Free, see below.

Items 5 to 9 are available from Ann Parham 850748. Whilst all the items are listed as free Ann would appreciate a small donation to the MS Society for each item.

Jobs

- 1) Help is offered with primary core subjects, or secondary English in exchange for help with heavy work in the garden. Malcolm Wright 850705.

Swimming Offer

GO Active Gold, in partnership with Better Leisure Centres are offering unlimited swimming for one month at your local pool during April to all over 60s who are resident in a rural community for just a single charge of £5. The objective of the offer is to encourage 400 over 60s to swim more often.

Register your place before Saturday 1 April 2017 by calling 01235 422226 or by completing the online registration form on website:

www.getoxfordshireactive.org/go-active-gold. Once you have registered, visit your local leisure pool during April and your one month swim offer will start from the date of your first swim.

Council News

Parish Council

The parish council met on Monday 20th March and the following items were discussed:-

Encouraging preliminary discussions have taken place regarding improving the appearance of a field in the AONB located behind the George and Dragon.

An investigation is to take place into the possible purchase of a defibrillator for public use to be located on or near the village hall.

Discussions were held with the editorial team of the Upton News regarding future policy for the parish newsletter.

A major effort is in progress to update the Parish Council information that should be on the village website.

The next Parish Council meeting will be the Annual Parish Meeting to be held in the village hall, date to be confirmed but will probably be on Wednesday 26th April at 7.15 for 7.30 pm start. Refreshments will be provided before the meeting. This meeting is the opportunity to listen to reports from the Parish, District and County Councils as well as other local organisations, groups and trusts such as UVHAT, NAG, St Mary's, UKAEA to name a few. There is also the opportunity for the public to express their opinions on what the Parish Council are doing, so please come along.

The Parish Council would like to thank Rob Traynor for organising the Litter Pick last Saturday and to all the parishioners who turned out to help. The parish looks a much tidier place.

District Council

Part two of the Vale Local Plan 2031 was published on the 9th March. There is the opportunity for residents to influence how planning application decisions are made. Residents can read the draft version and make comments at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2. The deadline for comments is on 4th May.

The South and Vale Councils are currently updating the Didcot Garden Town proposals following an extensive engagement programme. The final plan will be published for consultation in May.

The campaign to reduce contamination in recycling by introducing clear bags has been very successful. The contamination rate is falling and the quality of recycling has improved. Thank you to all residents who have helped the council achieve these results.

Approximately 2187 Christmas trees were collected this year in addition to residents recycling their own via brown bins. All trees go to a site in Wallingford to be composted.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults - 'say something

if you see something'. If you have any concerns about the well-being of children, young people or vulnerable adults, please raise your concerns to the Safeguarding team at the council.

Due to vehicle breakdowns, waste collection rounds have not been finished in the past few weeks. The Vale apologises to its residents for the inconvenience caused. The Vale is working with Biffa to minimise disruption.

Charity & Volunteer Awards - nominations now open until 3 April. Please visit the OCVA web site for more details.

County Council

Steventon railway bridge (built in 1837) is in the process of having a de-listing order applied for and to it so that it can be taken down and be replaced as part of the ongoing electrification of the train line.

The proposal called 'A new council for a Better Oxfordshire' is available at www.betteroxfordshire.org along with a joint statement from Council Leaders. The Secretary of State could invite views from local and national stakeholders before making a final decision on whether to accept the proposal. If successful, representatives from all six councils in Oxfordshire would be asked to work together to manage the transition to a new council. Work has already started on developing an approach that would enable the councils to work together effectively

Post Office News

Royal Mail has put their postage rates up from Monday 27th March, 1p on first and second (standard size) and 2p on first class large letter, 1p on second class large letter. Everything else goes up too, including parcels, but customers can now see when their parcel has been delivered (for free) by going to www.royalmail.com/confirm The postie will scan the 2D icon on the parcel as he/she delivers it, (hopefully!). Royal Mail have also introduced a new 3rd class stamp, cost 35p, with a delivery aim of anything up to 3 weeks, but are only on sale 1/4/17, and are valid all year.

David Bowie special stamps are on sale at the moment, with iconic racehorses on sale later in April.

We are collecting the "Active Kids" vouchers available in Sainsbury's, for Karen's girly guides, so if you have a few and don't know anyone who is collecting them, please bring them in!

We will be closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday; allowances paid on those days will be paid early, usually the working day before. We are open on the Saturday morning. Anyone who needs emergency top up of gas or electric during the days we are closed can ring my mobile 07825154842 and I will pop round to the PO.

Karen and Angela

Upton Wine Appreciation Club

March saw committee members of Upton's wine appreciate club presenting wines along a theme of "Blind Tasting". While it's often said that one look at the label is worth decades in the trade, how do we attempt to identify a wine when the bottle isn't available for scrutiny?

Using benchmark wines from Riesling to Malbec, we explored the application of a systematic approach to identifying clues to the wine's identity. And very quickly, it became clear that "Blind Tasting" did little to convey the importance of sight and smell when looking to identify a wine. From appearance, we deduced clues as to the wine's age, grape variety and possible alcoholic strength. The smell of the wine could then be used to give an indication of the wine's development, varietal group, climate and winemaking techniques (such as oxidative or reductive techniques and oak treatment). Having started to form an opinion, a considered taste of the wine could be used to consider sweetness, alcohol levels, acidity, tannic level and development, as well as the intensity, character, complexity and endurance of flavours that can help to distinguish a simple Chardonnay from a fine Burgundy.

If you would like to enjoy a glass of wine in convivial surroundings, perhaps learning a bit along the way, then why not join us? We meet in the Village Hall between 8.00pm and 10.00pm, and welcome everyone who has an interest in wine. We usually taste four white and four red wines per meeting - small tasting measures, so as to avoid any deleterious effects! We try to cater for all tastes and the evening is also enjoyed as a village social to meet with other village residents. With a membership of around 60 villagers, we regularly welcome more than 30 to each meeting and make a special effort to welcome new members from the village. If you're interested, you are very welcome to come along to your first meeting as a guest. The more the merrier! The club's regular meetings continue on the third Wednesday of each month. Subject to final confirmation, we intend to meet on 19th April for an evening of "Food and Wine Pairing".

William Betts

Upton 50 Club Prize Winners

£25	No. 148	Celia Davies
£20	No. 127	Mr Joel
£15	No. 57	Bob Lott
£10	No. 107	Malcolm Wright

The Upton 50 Club Subscriptions to March 2018 are now due and the Volunteer Collectors will be around shortly to invite you to support us for another year.

We would like to thank everyone in advance for their continued support.

Lesley Shaw

Didcot U3A

Didcot and District U3A Branch will hold their Annual General Meeting at 2.00pm on Tuesday, 18th April, at the Didcot Civic Hall.

New blood is needed to fill roles as officers and committee members as well as 'meeters and greeters' and 'tea makers' so please come along to help the organisation continue to grow successfully.

Friends of St Mary's

As announced in last month's Upton News, we are organising a walk on Good Friday from Kingstanding Hill back to Upton, where tea, hot cross buns and other nice things will be served in St Mary's. All are welcome!

Cars will leave Upton at 1.30pm so we can start walking by about 1.45pm. In the interests of efficiency, we will try to minimise the number of cars going to and being left at the start, so it would be helpful to know in advance who's coming. Please let me know (851251 or pjsbatho@btinternet.com) and we will get things sorted out. We will try to keep together but maps of the route will be available.

Looking forward to some fine weather, and seeing lots of Uptonians working up a healthy appetite for Easter eggs!

Paul Batho

Blewbury W.I.

April is with us promising some longer sunny days, lots of lovely spring flowers and Happy Easter celebrations. Below is a list of the events that Blewbury WI is holding during April, to which all new members are welcome.

Monday, 3rd April at 7.30pm - Coffee at Style Acre with Karen.

Wednesday, 5th April at 9.30am - Lyn's Walk. Meet at the Village Hall. We will be starting our walk from Cothill near Abingdon. Transport arranged on the day. It might be a bit muddy so stout footwear is advised. A pair of binoculars will be useful and don't forget pennies for coffee. Please ring Lyn the day before. 850795

Friday, 7th April at 1.30pm - Talking Science Lecture at RAL Harwell. Exploring the Deep Ocean versus Space with Russell Arnott.

Monday, 10th April at 7.30pm - Scrabble at Judy's. Please call first.

Wednesday, 26th April at 7.30pm - WI monthly meeting in the Vale Room. Linda Benton will talk about "Art Work Inspired by South Oxfordshire".

Mah Jong is suspended during the Summer months in favour of Croquet.

For more details of any of our events, or if you wish to join us, please ring Karen on 850219 or visit our web page, <http://blewburywi.wordpress.com> where you will find more information.

Cilla Maquire

April Garden Notes

I think we can safely say that Spring has sprung, and everywhere is looking delightful with a riot of colour from the masses of daffodils, primroses and very shortly bluebells in bloom. Enthusiasm has also risen after the dark days of winter, and gardens are being newly dug and planted.

In the vegetable garden, it's time to plant the first early potatoes, which should have been chitting somewhere frost free; take care not to damage their sprouts when planting. Just in case of a late frost, have some black cloth handy to cover them over which should keep them toasty warm while they get their roots down, although even if the top growth does get scorched, I have found that the plants recover quite quickly. Some potato fertiliser should be dug in whilst planting to ensure a good crop. I have second earlies and main crop potatoes still chitting in the cold greenhouse which I will get round to planting in the next month or so.

The black cloth is also being used on any uncultivated patches until ready to be planted; it works wonderfully well at keeping weeds down and makes the earth much easier to dig, as well as keeping it warm. I'm all for that!

If you haven't already sown broad beans, now is not too late. They are a hardy vegetable and provide good protein quite early in the season. And if you have not already cut down the autumn fruiting raspberries, do it now! Cut right down to the ground, where there will probably already be small green shoots starting to grow.

Fruit trees will also be starting to bud and the early ones are especially prone to frost damage, so have some large pieces of fleece handy to throw over them, remembering to remove it in the daytime so the sunlight (and the bees) can get at them.

At home I have tomato seedlings doing well on the kitchen windowsill, and am about to sow some nasturtiums and French marigolds as companion plants, to outwit the aphids. Peas and beans can also be started in this way.

I am informed there will be another free Compost Giveaway on May 13th at Crowmarsh Gifford car park, courtesy of Agrivert, so do take your sacks and bins along and fill up with some good stuff for your garden or allotment. This is made out of the contents of your brown bins.

Angela Hoy (angela.hoy@sky.com)

Wild Mammal Survey

How many of Britain's wild mammals have you seen recently? Wildlife charity People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) is calling on Oxfordshire volunteers to answer this question by taking part in their annual *Living with Mammals* survey, which asks the public to record sightings of Britain's wild mammals over a 13-week period, starting on Monday 3 April 2017.

To take part in the survey, register at www.ptes.org/living-with-mammals/

Theatre Group

There is still one ticket at £25 left for "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" at the New Theatre, Oxford, on 23 May.

Nothing else is booked yet for this year, but I would recommend the Blewbury Players' "Great Expectations" in the week ending 22 July.

Something may turn up for September or October, and I intend to arrange a trip to Stratford for the RSC's new version of "A Christmas Carol", probably after Christmas.

"Improbable Fiction" by Alan Ayckbourn at The Mill at Sonning, 23 March

A sociable and good-humoured twenty-two of us, a majority from Upton, but augmented by family and friends from elsewhere, sat down for an excellent meal in the picturesque restaurant at the still-functioning mill. We then proceeded to the spectacular amphitheatre - with easy acoustics and perfect sight-lines - to enjoy the expected professional performance of what had been billed as a hilarious comedy.

By the interval, I felt I had been misinformed. We had watched a mildly amusing meeting of a creative writers' circle, with some nicely delineated characters who evinced plenty of mutual likes and dislikes and a good deal of back history. Clem's barely intelligible Sci-Fi story, complete with the malapropisms which infuriated the ill-tempered Brevis, a retired teacher, was well delivered and the encouraging chairmanship of Arnold endorsed the sympathy one might have felt for the two budding authors, Jess and Grace, who hadn't yet managed to write anything. But It wasn't Ayckbourn at his funniest, and we were left bewildered by a blackout and a glimpse of people in Victorian costumes, one wielding a knife and screaming to end the first act.

All became clear. The stories envisaged by would-be authors were played out around a bemused Arthur, striving to maintain some sanity and reality in a whirl of activity. In close succession, he was invaded by Jess's Victorian melodrama, Clem's alien-hunting American investigators (complete with malapropisms) and Vivvi's poetry-quoting detective solving a mysterious death in the upstairs bedroom. This entailed an amazing number of costume-changes, usually heralded by another blackout - and the subtle switching of the telephone to indicate period. All actors except Arthur were given opportunities to show their versatility, and they revelled in it. The scenes became zanier and zanier - though there was a semblance of plot development in each story - and at last we were watching hilarious farce, well executed. Ayckbourn's invention and tidy plotting even included Brevis's half-finished song of the first act being used for a decidedly Shakespearean bergomask to round it off, waving alien detectors which doubled as buttercups and an alien pod which doubled as a walnut boat for the goblin of Grace's children's story. In the end, it was what we had been promised.

Malcolm Wright 850705

Jumble Sale Update:

Sarah Carter and I would like to thank everyone who helped out on the Friday and Saturday and to everyone for their donations. Everyone worked very hard and it was very much appreciated. We raised £643.50 on the day. An £80 donation has been made to Maggie's Centre Oxford (<https://www.maggiescentres.org/our-centres/maggies-oxford/>). We kept a few items by which are currently being auctioned off and hope to raise a further £100 or so. The remainder of the items were divided up and taken to Changing Lives and the Animal Sanctuary charity shops in Didcot, who were both delighted with the donations. So all round, a great effort by all.

Thank you again.

Giulia Rippon

Safe and Well Visits

Did you know that Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service offer free Safe and Well Visits? Our firefighters will visit you at home to see what they can do to help you reduce the risk of fire.

What does a visit cover? It combines a Home Safety Check to help reduce the risk of fire in your home, such as checking and fitting smoke alarms and helping you make a fire escape plan.

During the visit firefighters are able to provide advice and support to reduce any immediate risk from falls, fire, flood or power cuts. They can also provide advice on health and crime prevention too.

You can request a visit online at www.365alive.co.uk/safewell or call our Community Safety Helpline on 08000 325 999. If a loved one or friend would benefit from a visit please let them know about our Safe and Well visits.

Do you have a fire safety concern or question? There's lots of great tips and advice to help keep you and your family safer at home on www.365alive.co.uk. Or call our Community Safety Helpline 08000 325 999

Goal Posts

If you have been up to the recreation field in the last few weeks you would have noticed a new set of football/rugby posts. We are grateful to Uptonogood for the funding of these, as they have replaced the previous damaged posts and provided another facility to the already impressive Upton recreation field. A set of smaller goals have also been purchased and these will be assembled and put out as soon as possible. It has been nice to see youngsters already trying out their kicking skills. Rugby was one of the activities highlighted in both the adult and youth sections of the Parish Plan. Many thanks to members of the Parish Council for their assembly skills.

Rob Traynor Parish Council

Avoiding Thefts

Unfortunately we have had a spate of beauty spot thefts in our area. Beauty spots attract thieves due to visitors leaving valuables in their vehicles unattended. To try and reduce incidents in our area, follow these guidelines:

- Try to park in sign-posted parking areas.
- Be cautious about parking your car in isolation. Thieves can be put off when other people are around.
- Do not leave anything in your vehicle. A jacket or coat left behind may be of very little value to you, but a thief may think it has been used to hide a laptop or handbag and will break into your vehicle to find out.
- Take items with you rather than locking them in the boot, you can't be sure who has seen you.
- Before you leave home, think about what you need and leave any unnecessary items of value at home.
- Make sure you do not leave documents which have your personal details on in your vehicle.
- Do not leave your sat-nav in your vehicle and don't forget to remove the cradle and wipe the sucker marks from your windscreen.
- Remember to shut all windows and sunroofs and lock all doors. Activate the alarm and immobiliser.
- Make use of any security products you might have such as steering locks.
- Whilst enjoying the sights make sure you keep your bag and possessions with you.

Remain vigilant - report any suspicious people or behaviour.

St Michael's Concert

Richard and Charlotte Good and a couple of their Opera 'Buddies' will give a Concert in St Michael's Church, Blewbury on Saturday 20th May at 7.30pm—doors open at 7.00pm. It will follow the past very successful formula of well known pieces from popular Opera and songs from the Musicals. It will be an excellent concert of the highest professional standard and will appeal to a wide audience. A real treat and definitely not to be missed.

Tickets £15 include a glass of wine or soft drink and will be available from Blewbury Post Office from beginning of April or reserve from Pat Mattimore 01235 851088 bernardmat@btinternet.com.

Profit will be for St Michael's Church Piano Maintenance Fund.

Advertisements

Our newsletter has been different to those of most parishes in that we have never included business advertisements, the Blewbury Bulletin for example had 8 full pages of adverts in its February edition. At the moment it costs our Parish Council £20 each month for printing the paper copies that are required for those who are not able to receive the newsletter by email or just have a strong desire to read from paper rather than from a screen. Whilst £20 is not a very significant sum, now that we are back with 12 editions a year it is an annual cost of £240 which is quite a chunk of P.C. spend.

Your editorial team have had a chat with the Parish Council about whether the Upton News should pay its own way and between us we have decided that the possibility of just one page of business adverts each month paying for most of the printing cost should be investigated and if practical introduced.

A single page will be split into 8 text boxes measuring approximately 8 x 6cms. and each box will be made available at a cost of £2.50 per month or £25 for a full year's coverage. Providing there is availability a business may use more than one box.

Our priority will be to promote businesses run from within our own parish or by our own parishioners, if you fall into one of these categories and would like to take up a box please contact us at news@uptonvillage.co.uk. We will be very pleased to help you put your advert together.

Whilst on the matter of covering printing costs we remain keen to reduce the printing cost and distribution effort by reducing the number of paper copies required each month. We have recently been able to reduce the numbers from 90 down to 78 and our thanks to all those who have made the change. Remember you do get an email copy about 3 days before the print copy as it takes that time to organise the printing and distribution and if you really do prefer to read a paper copy you can always run off a print for yourself.

Late News (See page 4)

Karen finished the OX5 Run, 854th in 73mins 15 secs. Her Cancer Research UK total steps in March is 376 316 (about 163 miles) with a day to go, well in excess of the target of 10,000 steps a day. A great effort.

Submissions for *Upton News*
should be sent to
news@uptonvillage.co.uk.
Deadline for the May edition is
Wednesday 26th April