

Upton News



Vol 4 No.36 February 2015

I'm afraid a lack of material combined with the virus that's been circulating (cold, not computer) meant that January's Upton News didn't appear.

Lots of Parish Council news this month, and the impact of road closures and roadworks. I gather that discussions about traffic calming on Chilton Road continue. At least it looks like Steventon Bridge might not close...

More details inside on the imminent refurbishment of the village hall, which will require its temporary closure before Easter.

Brian Rippon

A Warm Welcome

Hello, we're Kieron and Jo, newly installed at Old Stream Cottage. We're thrilled to have the countryside on the doorstep after 20 years in London and to find ourselves in such a friendly spot.

Jo is a radio presenter (BBC R4 and World Service), Kieron's a freelance writer (most recently for GOV.UK).

Our specialist subjects are politics (Jo), sourdough (Kieron) and telling people that our dog's not overweight, she's just sturdy (both).

House Wanted

We're looking to find a house or cottage in or near Upton for the weekend of May 30th.

We hope to house the bridegroom's relations who are coming over from Spain for our daughter's wedding.

Caroline Maunsell

carolinemaunsell@aol.com

Babysitting Service

Baylie is 14½ years of age, lives in the village and would like to offer her services as a babysitter.

Baylie has many younger cousins who she is great with. She is very responsible, and has just completed her bronze D of E for which she worked in a charity shop in Didcot every Saturday for 6 months. Contact Baylie Powell, 01235 851544

bayliepowell@btinternet.com

Expect Gridlock...

I see on the Aldi website that the Didcot store is planned to open in April.

Given the limited parking available, I might just avoid the area for the first few days!

Parish Council News

District Council Update

Councillor Shelley reported that there has been severe disruption to council business following the fire at the council offices in Crowmarsh Gifford which have been largely destroyed. The Planning Department has been particularly affected. They are working through the backlog and may need to ask for some applications to be resubmitted. Upton Parish Council are happy to report that right now, we are not aware of any planning applications in the parish being adversely affected. Councillor Shelley also mentioned that she is chair of the Neighbourhood Action Group committee and there is a vacancy for someone to represent the Upton parish. If anyone would like to get involved, please get in touch at parish.council@uptonvillage.co.uk.

Chilton Road

Speeding traffic on Chilton Road is a matter of significant interest and concern to a large number of Upton residents, and the potential safety risk this presents, not just within the village but also at the junction of Chilton Road and Hagbourne Hill. Mr Mulvihill from Oxfordshire County Council attended the Parish Council meeting to explain why the decision had been taken to not close Chilton Road to through traffic - mainly due to the small number of reported incidents. Upton residents also attended and there was a very constructive discussion on what

possible options there are to slow traffic down on Chilton Road. The favoured options include 'no right turn' into Chilton Road heading down Hagbourne Hill, and a chicane entering the village on Chilton Road. Mr Mulvihill agreed to take these suggestions back to Oxfordshire CC and will update the Parish Council shortly.

Stream Road

There has been good progress with discussions with Oxfordshire CC regarding funding necessary work to reduce the risk of flooding on Stream Road. This funding amounts to some £1,600 plus VAT and it is expected that improvement work will be able to begin shortly.

Emergency Plan

As reported in the last *Upton News*, the Parish Council is in the process of creating an emergency plan for the village in order that we are able to provide a first response to incidents like severe adverse weather. Planning is well underway and the Parish Council would be delighted to hear from residents who have skills and equipment that would be useful in such an emergency, for example medical training or tools such as chainsaws, or four-wheel drive vehicles. There would be no obligation whatsoever on any residents who do come forward. This is simply so that we have an understanding of what resources might be available. In the event of an emergency all co-

ordination will be done by the Parish Council and all responses to this request will be held in the strictest confidence.

If you do have skills and/or equipment that might be useful in such an event, please get in touch at parish.council@uptonvillage.co.uk. And to all residents, please rest assured that while it's important that we do have an emergency plan, such events are very, very rare.

Parish Plan Questionnaire

Work on the parish plan questionnaire is almost complete and will be sent out soon, both electronically or in paper format for those without access to the internet. The questionnaire has been designed in full consultation with residents, and the Parish Council would like to thank all those involved for their hard work and patience. As a result the questionnaire will cover a number of topics of interest to Upton residents, and there is a section specifically focused on the younger members of our community. As mentioned above, the questionnaire will be sent out in the next few weeks. Please do take the time to complete the questionnaire as this will directly inform the Parish Plan.

Getting in touch

If you have anything you want to raise with Upton Parish Council - ideas, suggestions, matters of concern, please do get in touch at parish.council@uptonvillage.co.uk, or if you want to get in touch with specific Parish Council member, a full list of members can be found on the Upton Village website.

Road works...

Milton Interchange improvement scheme

A full traffic management system, which will include the A34, will be implemented 24 hours a day from Monday 16 February 2015. This is in addition to the traffic management already in place on the A4130 roundabout.

Traffic travelling south on the A34 will be subject to a 30mph speed limit through the traffic management. The left hand lane will be diverted down the slip road, around the A4130 roundabout, and back up onto the A34.

Traffic travelling north on the A34 will be subject to a 40mph speed limit through the traffic management, within narrowed lanes.

Traffic management on the A4130 roundabout: Two lanes of traffic will be maintained around the roundabout throughout the work. Areas of the third lane will be coned off as required to enable work to be carried out.

Hagbourne Hill

Improvement work began at Hagbourne Hill on Monday 26 January 2015. The scheme affects the full length of Hagbourne Hill from the A417 at the north end to Townsend at the Chilton end. The work includes carriageway resurfacing, strengthening of the edge of carriageway and drainage works. The road works will be carried out under a complete road closure of Hagbourne Hill and are expected to last for nine weeks.

Rector's Reflections

The Blackbird

The other day, I was looking through my kitchen window and spotted a blackbird, hard at work on the leaves on the lawn. The blackbird went from leaf to leaf, patiently turning each leaf over to see if there was anything interesting lying hidden beneath. I'm not sure it's search for food was particularly successful, but it kept going, hoping that something would turn up.

That blackbird got me thinking about the virtue of perseverance. I don't think perseverance is a particularly popular virtue. We tend to want to achieve things quickly and with the minimum of effort. The idea of simply plodding on for days, months, years, is unattractive. It can be hard to motivate ourselves for the long haul. Perseverance is hard work and, frankly, not particularly exciting.

But perseverance is still an important virtue. I'm sure that we can all think of examples in our own lives where something good has come to us after many years of effort and waiting. A particular qualification, perhaps, or a particular job. Or perhaps there's a particular relationship which has taken years to blossom and bear fruit.

Perseverance is also important in our relationship with God. God perseveres with us, and so we ought to persevere with God. There are times when our relationship with God seems to be going well, but there other times when God seems very distant. It can be easy for us to give up on God. Perhaps He doesn't seem to be answering our prayers, or at least answering them in the way that we would like them answered. Perhaps we have a sense that God is moving in the right direction, but that He's not moving fast enough.

We'll soon be coming up to the start of Lent, and Lent is a time of year when the virtue of perseverance comes into its own. It's not just a question of whether we will be able to persevere in our Lenten discipline, whatever that may be. It's a time for us to pick up the threads of our spiritual lives. A time to persevere in our relationship with God. Above all, it is a time to remind ourselves that God never gives up on us, despite our selfishness or lack of interest. God's dearest wish is to enter into a deep and transforming relationship with us, and God will never give up. Happy perseverance!

Fr Jason

Blewbury Players

The Taming of the Shrew - Auditions - Act now!

This year's summer production at Orchard Dene Garden Theatre will be *The Taming of the Shrew* directed by Erica Harley. Performances will be on 15th-18th July 2015.

Auditions 7th, 8th and 10th February
Please call 01235 850537 to ask more about this or to book an audition. If these dates do not suit please do call for an alternative.

Erica is looking forward to the auditions and to having a lot of fun working with you. "I have always loved the production for two reasons: because of the farcical nature of much of the action, but mainly because of the relationship between Petruchio and Katherine. The challenge for any 21st Century production is how to meet the perceived anti feminist elements of the play. This is a play where women are bought and sold, dowries negotiated and the highest bidder wins! Petruchio and Katherine, against all the odds, have a sexual chemistry that eventually overcomes all the obstacles. Or do they?? It is a wonderful opportunity to tackle one of Shakespeare's earliest plays which is the least challenging in terms of verse and language. And it needs actors who are willing to explore the nature of the relationships but also to enjoy the physical requirements of Farce. It will be fun!!!

Village Clubs & Organisations

Blewbury WI

Karen Brooks 850219
karencbrooks@gmail.com

Calor Gas Syndicate

Lesley Shaw 07739 047688

Drop In Sessions

Yvonne Collins 850989

Short Mat Bowls Club

Tony Durbin 850035

Table Tennis Club

Bob Lott 851222

Tea Birds WI

Jo Christie tea-birdswi@hotmail.co.uk

Theatre Club

Malcolm Wright 850705

Upton Oil Syndicate

Colin Batchelor 01491 672444

Upton Village Hall

www.uptonvillagehall.co.uk 887129

Village Produce Association

Eileen Bracken 510095

Wine Appreciation Society

Kevin Jacklin 851404

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

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

Deadline for the March edition is **Saturday 7th March.**

Blewbury WI News

I have spotted many snowdrops and the odd daffodil, and even a couple of crocus out in bloom on my travels around the village, there are buds on some of my shrubs in the garden, and although there are signs of spring, I fear a spell of icy weather will be upon us soon, most of our events are indoors at this time of year, apart from Lyn's walk, which will take us somewhere new, with a coffee stop somewhere, come and join us! We have many exciting outings coming up, including the Jane Austen Centre in Bath, Ludlow Castle, a boat trip on a steamer around Oxford and a tour of Oxford on an open topped bus, all in warmer weather of course!

- Mah Jong; Every Monday 2.30pm, ring Judy for venue! (New players always welcome, non WI too, a lovely way to spend a wintery afternoon!)
- Coffee at Style Acre Tearoom's, Monday 2nd February, 10.30am with Marilyn
- Lyn's walk, Wednesday 4th, meet at 10.30am, village hall, all welcome,
- February 4th, Trip to London to see Cats
- Scrabble; 11th January at Bernadine's house.
- A Woman's Lot; Freeland Village Hall.
- Wednesday 25th; Youngest Ever Mayor of Abingdon, with Duncan Brown, 7.30pm at Blewbury School, guests welcome.

For more details of any of our events, or to join the Mah Jong or Scrabble group, or if you wish to join us, please ring Karen on 850219.

Love from Karen

Post Office News

We have some beautiful stamps depicting Alice in Wonderland on sale at the moment, sadly, Royal Mail in their infinite wisdom, have decided to produce two of them, (81p and £1.47) that are not of much use at all! On the other hand, they have decided to extend their "special offer on 2nd class parcels between 1kg and 2kg" until the end of March, (£2.80 instead of £3.80), and we hope that they will not put their prices up too much in April! We have plenty of 1st and 2nd class stamps for those who like to beat any price rise, by buying early!

Please remember that we are actually not allowed to accept post after our "Last Acceptance Times" or LATs— these are clearly displayed in branch: 4.30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10am on Wednesday and Saturday (on these two half days, the postie comes to collect as late as he can, usually 11.30am, but post really needs to be in by then, to give us time to process it!).

We still have a gents silver ring, and a child's brown dotty coat, but now also have some snazzy black and red kid's gloves! The car keys found their owner!

Love from Karen & Angela

Upton 50 Club

Upton Village Amenities Trust (UVHAT) Charity Lottery

The Upton Village Charity Lottery known as the '50 Club' has been successfully raising funds now since HM the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. The concept was originally promoted by the late Tom and Nan Sutter of Chapel Furlong and then by the late Sheila Parker of Prospect Road before being taken over and tirelessly promoted by Jessie West for the past 35 years. Thank you Jessie for all your hard work on behalf of the village.

The origins of the '50 Club' started with 50 members each paying just 50 pence a month to participate in what was and still is a major charity funding initiative for the support of our village hall and local community facilities.

The idea is a much copied favourite with many other villages and communities who run charity lotteries on similar lines, recognised and regulated by their local councils.

This year your UVHAT trustees have decided to review and re-launch the Upton 50 Club to encourage more people in Upton to participate and to help support the ongoing work to update and refurbish the village hall. Our exciting new kitchen project will benefit all village hall users and in turn help to promote this important village asset and generate more funds for other future improvements.

Upton 50 Club Lottery Tickets will be available in March/April from your

local volunteer who will call round to see you to invite you to subscribe for the 2015/16 Draws.

Tickets will cost just £10 per year for 12 draws, and we are making a promise of bigger and better prizes as a thank you for supporting the work that the Trustees are undertaking for the benefit of the residents of Upton.

Prizes will be drawn monthly at the George & Dragon and funded dependent upon the actual number of participants in the Lottery. Prizes will represent not less than 50% of all the funds collected. Prize winners will be notified in person and a list of winners will be published in Upton News.

If you have supported our 50 Club in the past 'Thank You' and we hope you will continue to do so and maybe even consider buying an additional ticket... and if you have not given it a go before or you did not know anything about it we would really appreciate your support for this year.

Lesley Shaw
UVHAT Lottery Promoter



Village Hall Refurbishment

As most are aware, the trustees of Upton Village Hall have been hoping for some time to upgrade the kitchen to meet modern standards.

Following a year of hard work on consultation, design, fundraising, grant applications, and negotiations with suppliers, we are now nearly in a position to award contracts and commence work. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our users who have helped to support our grant applications, as well as WREN, the individual bequests, Vale of the White Horse District Council, the organisers of Uptonogood, Oxfordshire County Council, Upton Parish Council and the Doris Field Trust, all of whom have helped with funding. I would also like to thank the UVHAT sub-committee who have worked so hard on the designs and negotiations.

I'm delighted that we have been able to expand the scope of the original project, and as well as delivering a brand new kitchen double the size of the existing one, we will also be refurbishing the entrance hall and gents'.

Although we have tried very hard to minimise the overall impact on users, the work will require total closure of the hall for a short period of time for health and safety reasons.

The anticipated programme of work is as follows:

- 23 March: Hall closes
- 7-10 April (tbc): Hall reopens, kitchen not available and disabled toilet in use as an interim gents'
- 27 April: Hall fully open



What will it include?

Kitchen

- Kitchen doubled in size
- Modern flush kitchen units
- Built-in wall kettle
- Instant hot water
- High speed commercial dishwasher
- New 110cm range cooker and microwave
- Extractor cooker hood
- Full height fridge/freezer
- Hand wash basin
- Enlarged hatch to hall with electric shutters
- Hardwood 'bar' servery
- Integrated waste bins
- Uncluttered worksurfaces
- Lined walls with hygienic wall cladding

- Suspended ceiling
- LED lighting with dimmable downlights
- Floor level heating
- Glazed double doors

Hallway

- Lined walls
- Raised suspended ceiling
- LED lighting and downlights
- New doors to toilets and hall

Gents' Toilet

- Complete re-fit
- Improved layout



Wine Appreciation Club

“Unusual Wines from Unusual Countries”

As a bit of fun and to explore different grape varieties from different countries the Committee scoured the four corners of the globe to discover these wines.

The first wine of the evening was the **Chapel Down Bacchus 2013** - England (Wine Society £11.95) located in Tenterden Kent and produced from the bacchus grape, sometimes referred to as the “English Sauvignon Blanc”. A crisp refreshing wine with a gooseberry-tinged finish, but uncomplicated with little body.

Next was the **Dveri Pax Sipon (Furmint) 2012** - Slovenia (Wine Society £9.95). Furmint is a white Hungarian wine grape variety widely grown in the Tokaj-Hegyalja region where it is used to produce single-varietal dry wines as well as being the principal grape in the better known Tokaji dessert wines. In Slovenia where it is known as Šipon it has a typical pale yellow colour with golden hues. A delicate nose of apples and pears and lemons, bone dry, with cutting acidity.

The third wine was an old “favourite?” with a new modern concept. **Retsina Tetramyθος** - Greece (Marks & Spencer £7.95) from wine maker Panagiotis Papagiannopoulos, a Retsina made exclusively from organically grown Roditis grapes grown on north facing coastal vineyards on the Peloponnese. The resin is collected by hand from the pine trees adjacent to the vineyards, adding

1kg of resin for every 1000l of wine. Described as delicate, herby with pine flavours, but fruity and moreish by the use of superior roditis grapes, the wine is fermented in clay jars with wild yeast but without the oxidation familiar to Greek café retsina. An improvement from the retsina I used to drink a few years ago but still an acquired taste.

The last white was the “Orange wine” **Tblvino Quevris 2011** - Georgia (Marks & Spencer £8.99) from the Kakheti Region of Georgia. Described as a dry, gently-textured and quince-flavoured wine, this is an “amphora” wine using an ancient and traditional maturation method unique to the Eastern Georgia. The grape juice and skins are fermented together, then partially matured in large clay jars known as Qvevri that are buried in the earth for several months, developing the wine’s rich, unique style. There were comments of this wine tasting of sherry and even stewed apples. Being fermented on the skins the wine has tannins similar to red wine which is only found in “Orange” white wines.

Now for the Reds... To begin we went to Turkey where we tasted the **Kalecik Karasi from Vinkara 2012** - Turkey (Wine Society £9.50). The Vinkara winery is based in Kalecik, a town in the mountainous region north-east of Ankara. The Anatolia region, which encompasses most of Turkey, has a wine making tradition dating back to 3000BC, but during the country’s turbulent political journey both the levels of production and the quality diminished. The vineyards are surrounded by mountains, creating

an ideal microclimate for viticulture. A very pale red wine light and fruity reminiscent of a pinot noir and could possibly be served chilled under the hot Turkish sun.

The second red was an **Intenso Teroldego** - Brazil (Marks & Spencer £9.95). Brazil is the largest country in Latin America and considered the fifth largest wine producer in the Southern Hemisphere, and has been making wine since the beginning of its colonization, but it was the arrival of Italian immigrants, starting in 1875, that brought importance to the activity. A collaboration between M&S winemaker Jeneve Williams and Brazilian winemaker Lucindo Copat, this wine is produced in the town of Bento. The winegrowing region of Gonçalves is situated in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul roughly 500km north of Uruguay. Teroldego is a red Italian grape variety grown primarily in the northeastern region of Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Italy. Hints of spicy red fruits, tar, pine, and almond. Its acidity makes it a versatile food wine. A medium-bodied red wine with intense blackberry aromas, unoaked.

The penultimate wine was the Jewel of **Nasik Tempranillo Syrah** - India (Marks & Spencer £6.99). From the Nasik winegrowing area in India M&S winemaker Jeneve Williams (she's busy isn't she?) led her to the unique region of Nasik, high up in the hills of Maharashtra northeast of Mumbai. At Sula Vineyards, she has teamed up with specialist local winemaker Ajoy Shaw and owner Rajeev Samant to create this red blend. The grapes

are sustainably grown and harvested during the dry season to avoid the monsoon and at night when the warm days give way to chilly hillside evenings. Described as a vibrant red wine that's ready to drink now, and a mouthwatering partner for spicy curries like lamb rogan josh or slow-cooked red meat casseroles with beef or venison. Not a hit with the Club though!

The final wine, another red, was the **Stobi Winery, Vranec 2011** - Macedonia (Wine Rack £9.99). An intense, deep inky purple wine made from the unique local grape Vranec. It has a nose of morello cherry overlaid with roast coffee and liquorice. A tasty and characterful wine with crushed blackberry flavours and easy, rounded tannins. For food pairing it makes a great partner for dishes like roast pork, home-made pies, baked pasta dishes or a plate of mature cheese.

A show of hands at the end of the evening showed the Chapel Down Bacchus and the Dveri Pax Sipon were the favourite whites and the Stobi Winery Vranec the favourite red of the evening.

All in all an interesting evening introducing different grape varieties and blends which may make you want to try them again or want to avoid!

The next meeting is on Wednesday 18th February in the Village Hall where Lee Isaacs from The Oxford Wine Company will be doing a talk on his specialist wine subject - Argentinian Wines.

Kevin Jacklin

Notes from the Allotment

Although not particularly cold (other than a few days hard frost), the wind has been quite vicious and necessitated trips to the allotment to rescue mesh and ground cover sheeting that has been torn up and whipped around. Sprouts and broccoli plants have also needed a thorough heeling in where they have been bent over by the wind, but they are sturdy plants and will survive.

Brussels are finished but the kale and cabbages are hanging on, and I am waiting patiently for the broccoli to start sprouting. Rhubarb leaves are cautiously easing themselves out of their clumps and now is the ideal time to force the odd one to try and achieve that lovely bright pink and succulent stem; but leave it alone next year so it can regain its strength.

Gardeners World magazine recently did a trial of ideal baking potatoes and Vivaldi (a second early) came out top, so I shall give it a try this year. Best to order your favourite variety now to avoid disappointment, as well as starting off those vegetables that need a long growing season in trays in the (insulated) greenhouse: I'm hoping to sow some more broad beans in modules, as well as small trays of

leeks, shallots (which will keep for more than a year!); and chillies and tomatoes indoors. You could also try radishes and carrots under cloches - put the cloche in place for a while before you sow so that it has a chance to warm up the soil in the winter sun. It's still not too late to plant Garlic.

I haven't grown Jerusalem artichokes myself (although they are ridiculously easy) because they take up a lot of room and once you've got them, almost impossible to get rid of! However, I have friends who do have them and offer them to me, and apart from their unsociable characteristics, they are a delicious vegetable either roasted, pan fried or made into soup, either with or without hazelnuts which increases their nutritional value.

If we have some fine winter days, now is the time to remove the wire netting and clear the couch grass away from boundaries and the edge of the paths, as well as laying weed-free paths to make life easier when the real work begins; this is quite an investment if you do it properly but results in hours of work weeding and mowing if you don't!

Angela Hoy
(angela.hoy@sky.com)