

Upton St Leonards Life

incorporating Church News

Issue 80

April 2021



Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School

Half Term

Easter Trail

(2nd April to the 18th April)

Maps £5

(small prize for children while stocks last)



Maps can be purchased via: **USL PTA Website: www.pta-events.co.uk/uslpta**

Maps also available from **USL Post Office.**



Spring at last! School's back! Hope's in the air!

The school welcomed back all the pupils on March 9, and the picture at bottom left shows the welcome they received!

We ran a story competition for pupils on the subject of "Lockdown" which was won by Lila Dare. See page 7.

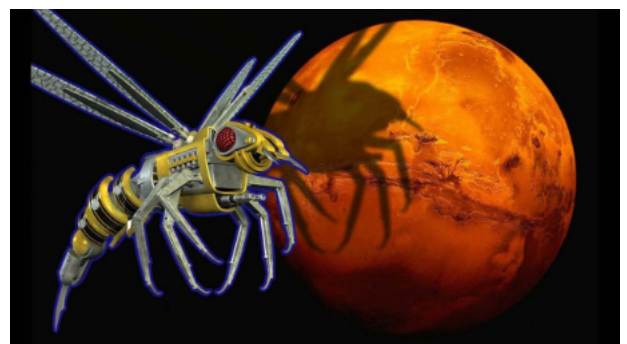
The PTA are organising an Easter Egg Hunt for us to raise funds. See their poster on the left and join in!

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

USL THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE is on page 8

The Portway Light Railway: page 14

The Gift of Perseverance - this month's unusual feature about wasps' nests. Could there be wasps on Mars? See photo below and read all about this on page 15



Editorial

Spring is here, so we are not just looking back at the past in this issue, but looking forward with hope that some of our annual events may return and that the village can be restored to normality. We have been asked by Stroud Council to draw every voter's attention to the forthcoming election in May, we are advertising the Upton Show in the hope that it will go ahead in September as planned, and we look forward to getting out and about again now that the days are longer and hopefully we may be able to resume some of the regular village activities in the coming months. Meanwhile we hope that this magazine will give you some interesting reading about our community and some past events.

Annual Parish Meeting - Monday 19 April 2021 7.30pm

This is the Parish Council's annual meeting with reports on all council activities

Any members of the public who wish to attend (it's a zoom meeting) need to contact Roy Balgobin, Parish Clerk, on uslclerk@btinternet.com and he will send out the necessary joining instructions.

If anyone wishes to raise any questions with the council, but is unable to attend the Zoom meeting, they can submit them to the Parish Clerk by Monday 12 April on the above email address or in hard copy via the Village Hall post box (including their contact details so responses can be provided).



Elections Job Opportunities

Have you ever considered working at one of our Polling Stations?

We are looking to recruit motivated staff to fill a number of important paid roles on election day.

On Thursday May 6th 2021 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, County, District and Parish Council elections will be taking place.

Planning is already underway and we would like to reassure you that our highest priority is the safety of our staff and our electorate.

We will be adhering to Government Guidelines, so our Polling Stations may look a bit different. And in order to deliver this plan, we will need extra staff at many of our Polling Stations.

These are paid roles across the whole of the Stroud District. And the Elections Team is keen to hear from you.

More information about the role and how to apply can be found here: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/elections/elections-job-opportunities>

Applicants must be over 18, eligible to work in the UK, and not affiliated to any political party.

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YOUR VOTE MATTERS

DON'T LOSE IT



In order to vote in the upcoming Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, County, District and Parish Council elections taking place on May 6th 2021 you must be registered on the Electoral Roll.

Planning is already underway and we would like to reassure you that our highest priority is the safety of our staff and our electorate. We will be adhering to Government Guidelines, so your Polling Station may look a bit different. Please help us to help you keep safe by following the guidelines.

To register to vote, please go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. You will need your date of birth and national insurance number and registering only takes a few minutes.

If you are not able to cast your ballot at a polling station or would prefer not to vote in person you can apply for an "Absent Vote".

Stroud District Council Elections web page has all the information you need:

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/elections/how-do-i-vote>

From here you can find out all about how to vote including:

Check if you are registered by using a quick link.

Register to vote deadline - Midnight, Monday 19 April 2021

Voting by Post –request or download an application form

Postal vote deadline - 5pm, Tuesday 20 April 2021

We must receive your application by post or email by 5pm on Tuesday 20 April to ensure you are able to vote by post. To vote by post, you must complete an application form which can be found below.

Voting by Proxy – request or download an application form

Proxy vote deadline - 5pm, Tuesday 27 April 2021

We must receive your application by post or email by 5pm on Tuesday 27 April to ensure you are able to vote by proxy. To vote by proxy you must complete an application form which can be found below.



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MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Villagers will have noticed that the space for memorial plaques on the bench at the Village Green is almost all used up. When the first row of 32 was filled up, the Parish Council simply commissioned a second row to make 32 more spaces, but the seat will look decidedly odd if more rows are stacked up. A design incorporating boards and a canopy has been chosen as the way to proceed. The picture gives an impression of what this will look like. This will be built in the next few weeks with volunteer labour.



Letter to the editor

With so many people taking walks nowadays may I remind people of the Highway Code which advises: “If there is no pavement, keep to the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic. You should take extra care and be prepared to walk in single file, especially on narrow roads or in poor light keep close to the side of the road.

It may be safer to cross the road to the left-hand side well before a sharp right-hand bend so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you. Cross back after the bend.”

Trevor Hall

BMI

As everyone is aware we have been closed since 5th November with only opening briefly for ‘Takeaway Ales’. Our New Steward, Brian Dodd, and his wife Lorraine, took up residence on 9th November. Brian still has to pull a pint behind his bars but he has been very active in the Club. On top of redecorating the hall, stairs, landing, the 3 bedrooms and bathroom of the Club flat, Brian has been working on the Bars. The whole Lounge and Skittle Alley has been re-painted, the bar in the Long Room has been stripped out, redecorated and all the pumps moved to make it more accessible. The same has been done in the Lounge Bar. The patio area has been jet washed.

If all things go to plan and the Government guidelines remain the same we hope to **open up on Monday 12th April, for outdoor service only**, with a maximum of 6 individuals or people from 2 households in a group. Our patio area is quite small so we are contemplating installing a medium sized marquee in the car park to accommodate more, with cover if it rains. Then on the 17th May we may be able to open indoors.

From Monday 12th April Members will be able to renew their Memberships for 2021.

Jim Browne, Hon. Secretary BMI

USL Life AGM

Monday 26 April at 7.30pm

As a CIC (Community Interest Company), we are obliged to hold an AGM each year to ensure transparency e.g. sharing financial performance and enabling a formal two way dialogue, although this opportunity is available throughout the year.

All members of the newsletter will have received an email from Cliff Alderman (Company Secretary) inviting them to our annual AGM with the necessary Zoom login details.

For anyone who is unable to attend for any reason, but wishes to raise any questions for the Board, please submit to Cliff in response to his email and we will ensure they are answered. If you want to raise anything and you are not on email, please send any questions on hard copy via the village hall postbox by Monday 5 April and include your address so we can respond to you. Thanks.

Peter Wilson, Chairman USL Life

USCAN AGM

The USCAN AGM will follow straight after the USL Life AGM, also by Zoom. Anyone interested can “attend”. If you aren’t a USL Life member, ask for the link from Andy Russell

UPTON SHOW



Can you help?

We are looking for volunteers who may be able to help us for a few hours at the Upton Show on Saturday 11th September.

We need helpers with the serving of refreshments together with someone happy to coordinate this. Some help, with setting up on the day and to generally assist would also be appreciated.



If you can help, please contact Kate Brooks for further information.

Please come and support the Village Show and hopefully enter some of the classes on the day.

Donations of cakes etc. for refreshments would be very welcome, together with books for the bookstall and bottles and stuff for the tombola/raffle prizes.

Finally, the “Teddy Tombola” is always popular, so if you have any clean “Preloved Teddies”, we will be delighted to find them a new home.

SEE CLASSES BELOW FOR OPEN SECTION “E” HANDICRAFTS

Classes 143 and 144 are to be new and unworn/unused

Competitor's ticket to be safety-pinned to article

All entries must be the competitor's own work

- 140 A soft toy in any medium
- 141 An item in macramé
- 142 Dress a doll. Any medium. (Doll not to be judged)
- 143 An article I have knitted, 4 ply or less
- 144 An article I have knitted, double knitting, Aran or chunky
- 145 An article of needlework other than clothing or toys
- 146 A patchwork or quilted bag
- 147 An article of cross stitch (please state size and also if the work is to your own design)
- 148 A cushion cover in any medium – maximum size 40cm x 40cm
- 149 An item of crochet
- 150 A piece of handmade jewellery – any medium
- 151 An invitation card for a special occasion
- 152 A drawing or painting in any medium. (Maximum size 305mm x 460 mm, excluding frame)
- 153 An up-cycled item made from a pair of old jeans
- 154 A decorated flower pot
- 155 An item made of wood or metal (not from a kit). Maximum dimensions 375mm square
- 156 A pram cover in any medium
- 157 Write a short story of not more than 50 words, to include the following words: roses, bicycle, dog, environment, spinning, hilarious, waterfall, train. (£5 prize for the best story)



For the attention of all dog owners! There seems to be an epidemic of dog stealing including in and around Upton St. Leonards. So we are publishing the Police warning below. Please take care of your dogs wherever you are.



Dog Safety in your area

There have been lots of concerns regarding theft of dogs in the County which, as we all know, is a worry for every pet owner. Below is some advice which you may find useful.

There are various ways you can help protect your dogs:

- Keep an ID tag on your dog at all times (your surname & mobile number)
- Secure gates using bolts at the top and bottom, along with a heavy-duty padlock and gate alarm
- Never leave your pet in the garden unattended
- Purchase a driveway alarm so you are alerted to any intruders. These can also be used in rear gardens and yards
- Make sure your dog is micro-chipped and their details are updated so that they can be returned if they are stolen and subsequently found.
- Avoid leaving a dog tied up outside a shop or left alone in a car, even for a few minutes
- Take lots of photographs of your dog, paying particular attention to any distinguishing markings, to prove ownership if it's stolen.
- You can also help prevent theft on walks by varying walk times and locations
- Be suspicious of strangers who ask questions about your dog. Make a note of any suspicious, loitering vehicles, remembering as much detail about the person/s or car registration and inform Police ASAP
- Go for a walk in pairs (Covid friendly)

If you notice any suspicious activity, contact Gloucestershire Constabulary on 101, or 999 if there is a crime in progress. PCSO Lianne Hiscock

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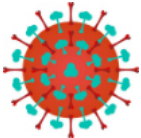
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Short Story Competition

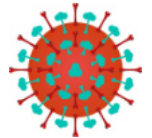
Children at Upton School were asked to write a story, up to 500 words, based around the lockdown, with the best three writers winning a small prize, and the best story to be printed in the magazine. Even after some selection by teachers USL Life received 23 stories to choose from. Three of our feature writers were the judges. They said: "All entries were a really good standard and all deserve praise. For us there was a runaway winner, which was clever and imaginative, it literally jumped off the page!"

This winning story, written by Lila Dare, appears below. Second place went to Jacob Clutterbuck - he wrote a letter to a friend about home schooling and the frustrations of having to stay in, but having fun when he could get out in the snow and on muddy walks. The third prize went to Oliver Cook who also wrote about his experiences during lockdown, with a new baby sister, enjoying "Mummy School" and a new appreciation for the countryside near us as well as quality family time.



My Lockdown Journey

by Lila Dare



I'm changing the world, one infection at a time. Smiles are no more and I'm making sure they don't make a comeback. I will rule the world. Now, I hear you asking, "What did humans ever do to you?" Well, who started climate change? Whilst everyone is in lockdown, the outside world has been thriving and I intend to keep it that way. Basically, because everyone is not at work, greenhouse gases have been cut down and aren't affecting the environment as much as before (yes, there is a school for viruses and I passed with flying colours). The humans are crumbling, losing hope. Boris Johnson relaxing the rules makes it even easier to infect everyone. I have already started eating away at the population, I can feel the despair and, little do they know, it is my source of power.

Floating around, I can see busy hospitals, immersing themselves into helping others; vacant schools and melancholy, dismal faces, staring into the empty streets. I see people queueing outside supermarkets, urgently waiting to be let inside. Signs stating 'Closed' stare at the silent streets. Thinking of the weary teachers and the fatigued frontline workers made me chuckle until I had a stitch.

Then I heard an obnoxious noise and my ears began to throb. They were . . . clapping? But I thought I had destroyed their spirits, crushed their hope. Pots and pans were hit with wooden spoons and they all cheered. I felt an agonising pain overcome me. They cannot defeat me, I am strong, I am omnipotent!

I have overheard people talking of vaccines; now I live in fear. A vaccine is a virus's number one enemy and countless tribes of infections have been prevented from doing their job. Curse those stupid scientists! Now, when I pass people by, trying to infect them, there is a barrier in the way. People are returning to the streets, these ghost towns are starting to have new life breathed into them. The battle rages on but my forces are being pushed to their limits. It is not just the scientific benefit of the vaccines, it is the hope and joy they bring. I move slower now and whilst I do see teachers in classrooms preparing for the return of children, I see people starting to leave their houses again. I feel the hope, and it kills me. I set out to break down communities and families, to destroy human spirit. They are stronger than I realised. They long to be together again. United in their pain they prove to be a mighty opponent. I don't know how much longer I can go on for, could be another year or only a few months. The tables have turned, the hope of humankind lives on, stronger than ever.

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USL PEAKS CHALLENGE



The Nutty Badgers Village Walks website was set up in April 2020 to give local people inspiration for their walks around our village and, at the last count, it has received over 5,000 views. More recently, the **USL Community Facebook Page** has shared people's posts whilst they are out walking in and around our village, in what is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This inspired me to create the USL Peaks Challenge and with it **The Ultimate Challenge**.

In summary, I have set up 8 Waypoints around the village on the peaks of prominent locations. The aim is to visit these peaks and tag in. Once you have visited them all, you can claim to have completed **the USL Peaks Challenge**. But for me that wasn't enough and so **the Ultimate Challenge** was devised.

So have you got what it takes for The Ultimate...?

You start at the Village Hall, then visit the following locations in any order, Nut Hill, Coopers Hill, Buckholt, Kites' Hill, Painswick Beacon, Cud Hill. Plus, visit the Waypoints at the Top of Portway and the Lodge at the bottom of Portway. We also suggest picking up Spoonbed, Prinknash Park and The Cheese Roll Hill as points of interest. Oh, and then you return to the Village Hall. This is about 10 miles. There is NO set route. It is up to you to decide on the best route. If you complete this all in one walk, you can claim to have **Completed The USL Peaks Ultimate Challenge**.

The first weekend the challenge was set, two walkers set off at 07.30am, two more at 08:00, and two runners at 9:45, all going for The Ultimate and completing, with further walkers tagging in across the Peaks over the weekend. Within the first week over 160 tags into the Waypoints had been achieved.

We have a website with all the info at nuttybadgers.org.uk/uslpeaks or you can scan the QR code above with your mobile device using the camera.

So enjoy our village footpaths, go for The Challenge and share your experiences on the Facebook page.
Stewart Tedaldi (one of the leaders at Nutty Badger Explorer Scout Group in the Village)

FREECYCLING



There is a new Facebook group for the Village – “Upton St Leonards reduce, reuse and recycle group”, and one of the objectives is to have a moderated freecycle exchange going. You need to join the group to see the posts – if this interests you, do join. Keeping it to members only is a precaution against chancers and time-wasters who plague freecycling initiatives.

We've listed some items in past issues. We'll see if we can have a regular feature including items posted in the Facebook webpage. You can then contact me on 07776 341333 or at andy2789@gmail.com or use the

“Contact Us” page on our website, and we'll get you in touch with the person offering the item.

On the Facebook page, for freecycling at the moment are:

- A blue plastic dog bed
- A paper shredder (not cross-cut)
- A small electric rotary lawn mower
- A folding garden table, about 2ft x 4ft

(no guarantees that these are still available by the time you read this) Andy Russell

St Leonard's Church News

Website: www.uptonstleonardschurch.co.uk

Photo: published with kind permission of Sara Hemming



Associate Priest: James Turk

Priest in Charge: Vacancy

There Is A Hope!

Someone once wrote: "Totally without hope one cannot live. To live without hope is to cease to live." I believe there is a great deal of truth in those words. In the difficult and often confusing world in which we live today, hope, for many people, is something that seems to be in short supply. In fact, I would even go so far as to say that in a world of Covid 19 hope, for many people, has died a death! But hope, I believe, is one of the key Christian attributes and one of the most important gifts we can give to the world today.

Nothing brings hope back to life like Easter. For the Easter message gives us hope in a bewildering world and hope to face the uncertainties of the future. This special day never arrives without its refreshing reminder that there is life beyond this one: True life. Eternal life. Glorious life. Those who live on the 'outside' of hope need an injection of hope (a hope 'jab' perhaps!) and Easter certainly gives it.

The Easter message is well known - there is no need to prolong it, complicate it, or try to explain or defend it. I cannot fully explain all that happened on that first Easter day in this short column, but the simple fact is that there is something magnificent, therapeutic, and reassuring about Easter morning - Hope. And this hope in the resurrected Jesus silences the empty message of sceptics and cynics alike. How? Because the evidence of the resurrected Jesus can be found in the testimony of many thousands of people who have had their lives transformed by the indwelling presence of Jesus through a personal trust and faith in Him. Our identity, at this time of Easter celebration, is strengthened as we stand together and proclaim: Alleluia! Christ is risen - He is risen indeed. Alleluia! This hope can be with us every moment of our life.

The prayer of St. Patrick (whom we remembered on March 17th) puts it into a much better perspective than I ever could:

*Christ be with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit,
Christ where I arise, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me. Salvation is of the Lord, Salvation is of the Lord, Salvation is of the Christ,
May your salvation, O Lord, be ever with us.*

Amen.

Easter Sunday is our chance to celebrate the miracle of Easter, the beauty of God's creation and the blessing of having Jesus in our lives and who is with us in all we do. In this season of rebirth, may you feel your faith renewed and your heart made new with the hope Easter brings.

James





A Warm Welcome

To

Savannah-Leigh

Born to Casey and Tyler

on

Thursday 18th February

A beautiful first grand-daughter to Paul and

Great grand-daughter to Jenny

*Congratulations and best wishes from all at
St. Leonard's church*



Washday

Maundy Thursday – 1st April

Washday is a National Campaign created by the Diocese of Oxford introduced a few years ago and is a practical social action during Lent and Holy week

Washday is a new take for Maundy Thursday which was the day of the Last Supper and when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples as an act of humility and service setting an example that we should love and serve each other too.

Instead of the traditional washing of feet maybe a few of the following ideas would make an acceptable change

- Wash some window for people who would find that difficult
- Offer to wash clothes for people who are homeless
- Volunteer to wash up mugs in an office or shop
- Wash some road signs
- Organise a litter pick
- Do someones washing up
- Help out at a night shelter

Let us know how you get on!

Easter

With the gentle easing of lockdown we hope to be able to resume services over Easter. At present we are hoping to hold the following services:-

Palm Sunday 28th March 10.00 am

Good Friday Vigil at the cross, in church between 2.00 pm and 3.00 pm

Easter Sunday 8.00 am and 10.00am

These arrangements are of course subject to change as we will be adhering to government guidelines at the time and further details will be available nearer the time.

All previous restrictions and precautions will again be in place.

You will also need to let Gill Howell know if you will be attending to ensure a place as numbers will still be restricted

*Readings for April
2021*



April 4th Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18

April 11th

Acts 4:32-35

John 20:19-end

April 18th

Acts 3: 12-19

Luke 24: 36b-48

April 25th

Acts 4:5-12

John 10:11-18

When church has reopened and services begin again, James has kindly offered to continue recording the service and will post to the WhatsApp group each Sunday, but later in the day, for those who are unable to attend church or for those still self isolating.

The Wednesday evening prayer group will continue at 9.00pm and will take place on Zoom. Please contact James using the usual method of phone or email if you would like to be added to the list. Each Wednesday James will send a digital 'Zoom' link which can be used to log into the live service at 9pm.

Tower Floodlighting 2021

April 2021 the Tower lights will be lit for

3rd April in memory of my wonderful husband Terry Ilott, who died two years ago. On April 3rd 2021, we would have celebrated our Golden Wedding. With love from Lesley and all the family

6th April, in remembrance of dear Ron, on the day he would have been 80, a loving husband, daddy and grampy. So loved and missed by us all xx

10th April in remembrance, on the anniversary of the passing of my dear husband John. So loved and missed by Hazel and family

18th April in remembrance of Dr Frank Hakim being the fourth anniversary of his death, a dear husband, father and grandfather. Kindly sponsored by his wife Margaret and the family

27th April, in remembrance of Norma Brinkley, whose birthday it would have been on this day. Kindly sponsored by her Son, Alan

28th April, In memory of Tracy Coles née Williams on her birthday. With love and happy memories from all the family

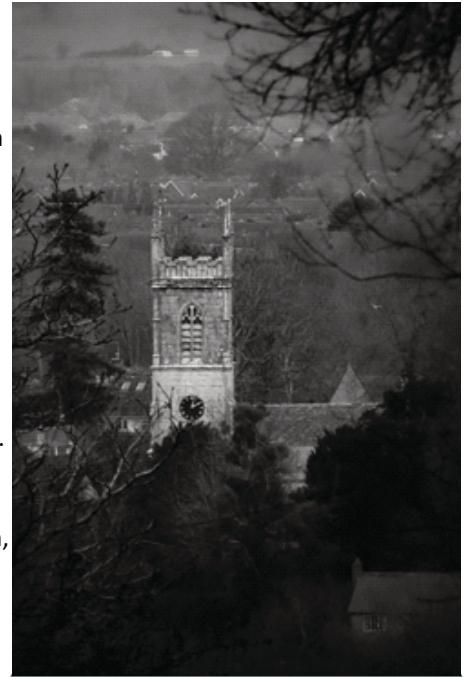


Photo: published with kind permission of Dean Rhodes

if you or your family would like to have the Church Tower Floodlights lit to celebrate a special event such as a birthday/anniversary/Baptism or in remembrance of a loved one please contact Jenny Cunningham for more details. There is no set amount for this, just what you would like to gift to the Church in order to help cover running costs. If you are able to Gift Aid your donation this will help us too.

Please note that the deadline for the Church Pages of USL Life is the 8th of the preceding month.

Thank you to everyone who contributed towards the collection for Clodagh
Below are copies of the letters sent and received.



Dear Clodagh,
I hope this letter finds you feeling a little better. The village and congregation would like you to accept this gift of their appreciation for all the care and devotion that you gave to all of us in your time here at St Leonards. Your kind and gently approach touched everyone you came into contact with, you left lots of memories with us that we will never forget, and all of us are richer for having known you. I know I speak for the whole congregation in wishing you God speed to full health. Kindest regards to Dan, Ffion and Connell.

Gill

Dear Gill

I write to say thank you to everyone who contributed to the very generous gift I have received from St Leonards church community and Upton St. Leonards community.

I was deeply touched that people have shown such kindness and I look forward to spending the money on something that will remind me of the community which has been close to my heart.

I continue to pray that the church community and the wider village "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever more! Amen"

With love and thanks

2 Peter 3: 18

Clodagh



Who's Who in the Parish Church

Priest in Charge

Vacancy

Associate Priest:

Rev. James Turk

Churchwardens:

Gill Howell

Vacancy

PCC Secretary: - Sarah Kent

Church Treasurer

Vacancy

Baptism & Wedding Enquiries

Church Administrator - Jenny Cunningham

Safeguarding

Dorothy Cox

Bell Tower Captain

Charlie Burnett

Mother's Union:

Kate Gale

Church Cleaning Rota:

Claire Appleyard

Church Flowers:

Jenny Cunningham

USL Life (Church pages) and Pew News

Rachel Middleton

Upton St. Leonard's Mothers Union



By the wonders of Zoom some members of the Branch were able to join in the Diocesan Members' Day in early February. Unfortunately, it was announced that both the planned Festival Service in April and THE BIG DAY in aid of AFIA have had to be cancelled. AFIA is the Away From IT All scheme which gives families who are experiencing stress or other difficulties a much-needed holiday.

Later in the month several members, again using Zoom, joined in the Diocesan Midday Prayers which were arranged by our Gloucester City Deanery. Deaneries take it turn to arrange these monthly prayers and they are usually held in the Lady Chapel at the Cathedral, but of course that is not possible at present.

Who would have thought we would have been SO excited to receive a "Jab". We do not know what the future holds, but we are optimistic, prayerful and trusting that our meetings will recommence, friendships will thrive, and we will continue supporting the work of the Mothers' Union Worldwide.

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Branch Leader

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ARTS PAGE

Our themes this month are Spring and Hope. We begin with a poem by Thomas Hardy which reminds us of birdsong which heralds the arrival of Spring.



Proud Songsters

The thrushes sing as the sun is going,
And the finches sing in ones and pairs,
As it gets dark loud nightingales
In bushes
Pipe, as they can when April wears,
As if time were theirs.

These are brand-new birds of twelve-months'
growing,
Which a year ago, or less than twain,
No finches were, nor nightingales,
Nor thrushes,
But only particles of grain,
And earth, and air, and rain.



The Woods and Banks by W.H. Davies

The woods and banks of England now,
Late coppered with dead leaves of old,
Have made the early violets grow,
And bulge with knots of primrose gold.
Hear how the blackbird flutes away,
Whose music scorns to sleep at night:
Hear how the cuckoo shouts all day
For echoes – to the world's delight:
Hullo, you imp of wonder, you –
Where are you now, cuckoo? Cuckoo?

Brief Thoughts

Humanity always fails me,
Nature never. **George Bernard Shaw**

In the climate of England there are, for the lover of
Nature, days which are worth months . . . even years.
William Wordsworth

The voice of Nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies;
That on his frail, uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight:
Robert Burns

Birdsong from a willow tree by Anon, (Irish Oral Tradition)

translated by Seamus Heaney

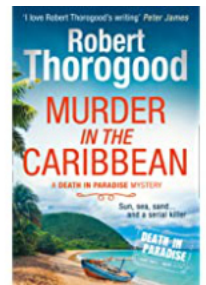
Birdsong from a willow tree,
Whet-note music, clear, airy;
Inky treble, yellow bill –
Blackbird, practising his scale.

The Heart of the Wood by Anon, translated by Augusta, Lady Gregory

My hope and my love,
We will go for a while into the wood,
scattering the dew,
where we will see the trout,
we will see the blackbird on its nest;
the deer and the buck calling,
the little bird that is sweetest singing on the branches;
the cuckoo on the top of the fresh green;
and death will never come near us
for ever in the sweet wood.

BOOK REVIEW

We cannot resist a journey to a tropical island and recommend to you **Murder in the Caribbean by Robert Thorogood** this month. Published in 2018 and adapted for television (Death in Paradise), the book reminds us of Agatha Christie and is both funny and dark – a classic whodunnit.



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The Portway Light Railway



If you take the footpath from Valley Lane towards the orchard and Prinknash, I expect you will have noticed, in the first field you come to, a raised ridge that runs along the fence. You have to cross over this ridge. You may have wondered what it is – it surely can't be a natural feature. It isn't. It was the track bed for a railway, and you can see it runs all around the field, and by the stream you can see some concrete blocks, now somewhat askew, which supported a viaduct for the rails. This was the Portway Light Railway, built by Nigel Rainbow, who used to own the house on Portway called Merryhill and its adjoining paddock where the track was.

The engine was large enough to sit on and it pulled a few carriages which could take passengers. On some Village Fete days, Mr Rainbow opened up his railway for rides – great fun. The last occasion was in about 1979, as quite a few Villagers will no doubt recall.

The picture shows the Rector Peter Jackson as the engine driver, and a few children in the coaches behind. However, I am told that this picture was posed and Revd Jackson was not actually allowed to drive the engine!

Andy Russell

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The gift of Perseverance

A feature by Linda Munnoch



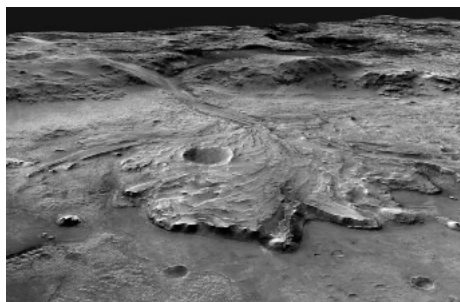
I've said it before: it is those unexpected 'light bulb' moments that help inspire and stimulate creativity when it comes to contributing to our magazine. So, during recent renovations at a family member's home which began towards the end of 2020, amid the chaos and upheaval, just such a moment transpired, as structures were uncovered between floorboards and ceiling panels, revealing what I can only describe as a planetary system.

We gazed in wonderment at these incredible feats of engineering. Were they bees? Potter bees maybe? Masonry bees? There were two big ones and some smaller structures. The builders carefully removed them for us so that we could have a really good look at these hidden gems. We realised they were paper thin with honeycomb centres – then the penny dropped – it was 'fence nibbler' – the culprit I had spotted on the garden fence back in the summer, gleaming wooden slivers which led to my discovery and the feature on the invention of paper! Yes, WASPS! Well, well, so that's where you'd been hiding?! Actually, not hiding I have discovered, as with exception of the queen, all the workers who build these incredible orbs die off, leaving behind the queen each year to start a new colony. Upon inspection we found evidence of wasp 'soldiers', servants (females) doing their duty to their queen and prepared to die for their species. A parallel there perhaps? A lone queen lays a few eggs and when they hatch, these sterile female workers help the queen tend the next batch, feeding and increasing the size of the nest. Male wasps are 'stuffed' into empty cells to stop them poaching food, hence a lot of them starve to death, and those that don't starve die from the cold. Older queens and females die too when there is a cold snap. Gosh, who'd be a wasp! Male wasps exist merely to impregnate the queen and then his job is done. Nature can be so mercenary.

The perseverance of these tiny critters (Apocritas- remember?) never ceases to amaze: year after year they just do what nature has decreed they should do, nibbling, building and reproducing.

Microcosm: defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a community encapsulating in miniature the characteristics of something much larger.

I said at the start we uncovered a 'planetary system', maybe I'm stretching the imagination too far (I am a bit of a space geek!) but I can't help comparing these spheres to that of our larger celestial one. Comparing the photos we took of the nests to some of the planets, and of course the recent landing of Perseverance on the 'red planet', I have to draw comparisons: we are now populating these distant worlds with our own 'wasps' and in centuries to come maybe there will be life on Mars!



Postscript:

We're not the only creatures emerging from stasis and like all life that nests in winter we are beginning to get the urge for the warmer months ahead. As nature takes its course and animals of all types emerge, there are some which could be headed in your direction – are you feeling lucky?

The 'Other' Virus

Odd Bits

I'm hiding from the virus beginning with a 'C'
Instead another one was lurking, especially for 'Me'

It's not a very friendly one, it's itchy and it tingles
It hit me from the left hand side, I have the dreaded 'Shingles'

One morning I woke up and felt my hip was sore and numb
Later on that afternoon, it had spread around my bum

The spots were next and then the rash and loss of appetite
Although dosed with Paracetamol and calamine, it kept me up all night

The doctor said 'I'll check this out, you can't come in my room'
You'll have to show me on your phone, we'll do it all by Zoom

After checking out my bum and hip, he said 'now take this pill'
But all it did was make me worse, dizzy, sick and ill

Daily doses of paracetamol and calamine helped ease my aching back
Four weeks have passed since the brute called 'S' decided to attack

I woke today and felt much better, my skin no longer numb
The pain is less, the spots have gone, the battle nearly won

Help is finally at hand from my friend I call 'Immune'
He's brave and strong - now he's in charge and caller of the tune

Goodbye, big 'S' you didn't win, you gave me stress and pain
You're bashed and bruised, defeated, you won't see me again

Finally the light at the end of the tunnel is here at last to see
There's so much to look forward to, at last I can be me!



This March all UK residents were required to complete the 2021 census form, so the following reminiscence by one of our feature writers is most timely:

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE FIRST POST WAR CENSUS: 1951

Sunday April 8th was such an interesting day for me. I was a member of the annual 3 day hike in the Brecon Beacons for "A" level geography students. I was new to the VI form and was just eligible.

My first vivid memory of this trip happened about midday on Sunday; it was raining and we were near a railway station; we decided to eat our lunch in the shelter of the waiting room. Imagine our surprise when we found a fairly large refreshment room crowded with people enjoying themselves with drinks from the bar, (Wales was "dry" on Sundays unless you were a traveller). They were very anxious to know how we found them, purely by accident, we said, but was it?

Our day ended at Tyn y Cae Youth Hostel. It was fairly remote and some members of our group hinted that the electricity supply there was generated by two goats tethered to a turntable!

The evening provided for me the second vivid memory of that day. It was the day of the first post war census and I was the youngest in the group, so was the first to be interviewed by the warden. The questions were very interesting, but had a decidedly Welsh slant. Of particular note is the fact that this was the first time I was ever being interviewed as a person in my own right, not just as a member of my own family or as part of the class.

Since then I have often wondered if anyone has ever tried to trace any of us back to the 1951 census only to find that we were absent that day from our home addresses. Would anyone ever think of searching for us at a Youth Hostel in the Brecon Beacons!

Ann Morphew

INSPIRATION

LONG LIVES WELL LIVED. TWO PEOPLE WHO HAVE INSPIRED US, WHOM WE REMEMBER WITH RESPECT: Captain Sir Tom Moore of national fame and our local not quite centenarian Barbara Waite, well known in our village over many years.

Barbara Waite

We recently heard the news that Barbara Waite, aged 99, passed away peacefully at her home in Perry Orchard, where she had lived since the houses were built in the 1960s. She is survived by her grandchildren and we send them our condolences. We hope to publish an obituary in the next edition of USL Life.

Barbara lived a long life and was an inspiration to us all..

Tribute to Captain Sir Tom Moore

On 6 April 2020, the nation became aware of Captain Tom's efforts to raise money for NHS charities during the Covid-19 pandemic. The 99 year old set himself a target to walk 100 lengths of his garden with the hope of raising £1000 by his 100th birthday. On that day he had in fact raised over £39m including Gift Aid.

In recognition of his efforts, he

- Received the Helen Rollason award at the BBC Personality of The Year Show
 - Had flypasts over his home by the RAF and Army
 - Received over 150,000 cards of congratulations
 - Was appointed as honorary Colonel of The Army Foundation College
 - Was knighted by the Queen at Windsor Castle
- Captain Tom passed away on Tuesday 2 February after being admitted to hospital with breathing difficulties due to Covid-19.



Barbara Waite featured in a photo on the back page of the June edition of USL Life this year.

Tom Moore

by our local resident poet Ted Gardner

Born long ago
When the world was young,
And probably a much nicer place,
A brave old man,
Whose memory can
Put a smile on everyone's face.
Rose to the cause
And without a pause,
He did what he thought had to be done.

And although he's gone,
He will still carry on
Up in heaven with all of his mates,
He will raise a few quid
Like the rest of them did,
And keep a shine on the old pearly gates.

He epitomised the indomitable spirit of our wartime generation and was a true inspiration to millions of people worldwide during some of the most challenging of times in recent history, bringing the nation together in celebration of his fundraising efforts.

Sir Tom will be remembered as a shining beacon of hope in what was a difficult year for all.

His achievements during his military service in the Second World War and his more recent accomplishments, raising millions for the NHS and establishing [The Captain Tom Foundation](#), means that his legacy will live on and help many generations to come.

He will remain a symbol of positivity and hope and will be missed by many people across the world to whom he has come to mean so much.



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Village Diary

Please note, once again these details are still provisional due to coronavirus.

MARCH

29	Mon	Organised sport can restart!!!	
30	Tue	Tennis Club night.....	Tennis Court 6pm
30	Tue	Cricket Club practice - seniors and U15	Recreation Ground 6pm

APRIL

1	Thu	Cricket Club juniors	Recreation Ground 5pm U9, 6pm U11,13
4	Sun	Tennis Club morning	Tennis Court 10am
5	Mon	Easter Monday	
6	Tue	Rubbish and Food Waste Week. Garden rubbish for those with brown bins	
6	Tue	Tennis Club night.....	Tennis Court 6pm
10	Sat	Copy date for May issue of USL Life	
11	Sun	Tennis Club morning	Tennis Court 10am
12	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	via zoom 7.30pm
12	Mon	BMI opening today - sitting outdoors - WE HOPE!	
13	Tue	Recycle and Food Waste week	
13	Tue	Tennis Club night.....	Tennis Court 6pm
18	Sun	Tennis Club morning	Tennis Court 10am
19	Mon	Parish Council Annual Meeting by Zoom - see page 2	7.30pm
20	Tue	Rubbish and Food Waste week. Garden rubbish for those with brown bins	
20	Tue	Tennis Club night.....	Tennis Court 6pm
25	Sun	Tennis Club morning	Tennis Court 10am
26	Mon	USL Life AGM followed immediately by USCAN AGM.....	Zoom 7.30pm
27	Tue	Recycle and Food Waste week	
27	Tue	Tennis Club night.....	Tennis Court 6pm

MAY

1	Sat	Cricket - first league games. Upton St Leonards 2 nd XI play Ruardean Hill 2 nd XI at the Rec	
3	Mon	May Day Holiday	
6	Thu	Local elections	Village Hall..... 7am-10pm
10	Mon	Copy date for June issue of USL Life	
10	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion or via Zoom 7.30pm
24	Mon	Lady Downe Trustees meeting (to be advised)	Upton St Leonards School 7.30pm
31	Mon	Spring Bank Holiday	

JUNE

7	Mon	Upton WI.....	Pavilion 2.00pm
7	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion 7.30pm
10	Wed	Copy date for July issue of USL Life	
14	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall..... 7.30pm

To get an entry in the Village Diary, please contact Paula Quinn

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Spring is here and hopefully we'll be out and about in our gardens as often as we can. **The SDC News** which was recently delivered to the residents of Upton St. Leonards draws our attention to the role we can all play in keeping our outdoor environment pleasant for our neighbours.

BONFIRES! The request is to avoid having bonfires, but to dispose of garden waste in ways that won't cause smoke and irritation to neighbours: we can take our rubbish to the tip (you need to make an appointment) or use a brown wheelie bin (or two) which you can acquire from the Council.

BBQs: greasy, smelly, smoky barbecues can be just as annoying as bonfires. So let's be considerate to our neighbours.

NOISE! Excessive and/or continuous noise (e.g. loud music, dogs barking continuously, machinery) can be extremely annoying and can even cause ill-health. We are advised to keep noise to a minimum and we are warned that if the noise is deemed to be a statutory nuisance, action can be taken and legally enforced.

DOGS! We are reminded to respect the dog walkers' code by picking up dog faeces and disposing of them correctly, as well as keeping dogs on leads in designated areas such as specified footpaths and so forth.

May we all enjoy a lovely spring, summer and autumn outside again. The confinement we endured indoors through the winter is hopefully over now that the days are longer.

INDOORS AND OUTDOORS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Sports in the Village as lockdown eases

Sports clubs and individuals are keenly awaiting 29 March and hoping the date is not pushed later by the government. From this date (information correct at the time of writing but subject to change) outdoor sports facilities can re-open.

TENNIS – The club will resume the Tuesday evening (6pm) and Sunday morning (10am) club sessions and the courts will be available at other times to members. As it happens, all tennis memberships need to be renewed from 1st April, and new members are most welcome – now is the time to join!



FOOTBALL will have some games arranged for one team. The Leagues they play in have been cancelled for the 2020-21 season, and the Stroud District League, in which the USL 2nd XI plays, is not organising any games until the 2021-22 season starts. But the Gloucester Northern Senior League (USL 1st XI) will have a mini-tournament running through April, so players can get as many games

as possible.

CRICKET – leagues are planning a full season starting in May, so there will be adult and youth cricket games every week, and no doubt some practice games will be organised in April. Outdoor practice will also begin in April. New members, adult and youth, are always welcome. We have coaching for juniors in school years 3 and above.



Incidentally, the Cricket Club is having maintenance work done on the nets – after 5 or so years the surface matting needs to be lifted, the layer under that flattened again and the matting re-laid.



PETANQUE – the club is planning to open the piste up for practices and games. Again, new members are always welcome.

The Pavilion will not be usable for changing, showering and refreshments and indoor activities such as indoor fitness, yoga, Pilates etc., until a later stage of the lifting of lockdown when indoor mixing is allowed. Toilets will be available during formal club sessions.

UPTON ST LEONARDS LIFE

Web site: <http://usllife.org.uk>

To contact us, use the website above or the postbox by the Village Hall main door, or use the contact details that appear below:

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Next month's editor

Andrea Dawson



Contact via the postbox at the Village Hall or via the "Contact Us" box on our web page

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INDOORS AND OUTDOORS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE . . . continued

TLC Choir (formerly the Twyver Ladies Choir) have been meeting via Zoom since last April. On Thursday 4th March we celebrated 40 weeks of Zoom and decided to call it our Ruby Anniversary. We dressed in shades of red and had various drinks of similar colours!



We owe a great deal to our musical director, Sylvia Ardron, whose husband, Keith, allowed us use of his Zoom account and led us along the route which, after a few 'hit and miss' weeks, had us joining together and enjoying friendship online while doing something we all love – singing! Unfortunately, we cannot get over the restrictions which internet speeds cause us, so we mute individuals, and we all sing our hearts out, duetting with Sylvia while she plays. After a few songs we unmute for a chat, then go back to sing again. The process has kept us relatively sane during lockdown – although I look a little loopy in the photo – and it isn't even wine, it's beetroot juice!

The choir all thank Sylvia very much for her persistence in keeping us going throughout the pandemic. We are only missing one or two of our regular members, and send love to all those who cannot undertake to join us at the moment. Hopefully, we will all be together again soon!

Janine Black



Green shoots of Spring have appeared on our walks around Upton, in our gardens and on the verges - HOPE IS IN THE AIR.

