

Upton St Leonards Life

incorporating Church News

Issue 112

December 2023



What's Inside

P2 Raise the Roof Update

P3 Street Vet Award

P5 & 6 December Events

P8 Arts Page

P9-12 Church Pages

P14 Christmas Feature

P15 E-Bike Proposals

P17 Diary



Arrive on time
on an e-bike

From all of us at USL Life, we wish you all a very happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and thank you again for all your contributions throughout the year.

Editorial

Advent Window Trail



December's Advent Trail will run from the 1st December to the 1st January. Maps will be available from the Post Office free or with a voluntary donation in aid of the school and church roof (we will split any funds raised between both).

Kind regards, Michelle King



FAMILY NATIVITY SERVICE

Christmas Eve 24th December, 4pm Upton Church

Everybody welcome and if children would like to dress as Shepherds, Wise Men, Angels and Sheep we would love to see you and you can help us with the Nativity Story.

What a lovely start to Christmas!



My grand-daughters attended this last year and thoroughly enjoyed taking part, despite Grandma forgetting the all important props - tea towels!!

Raise the Roof The Church Roof Fund

Many thanks once again to all those people who have continued to generously donate cash and their time to raise money for the Raise the Roof Appeal. The total fund continues to increase and now stands at £131,750.

The recent posh afternoon tea was very well supported and raised a total of £1,126. Thank you to all those people who took part and to the hardworking organisers. Gift Aid on your donations so far has raised £3249, so please continue to Gift Aid your contributions where possible.

Events in December include the Brass Band Christmas Concert plus a serving of mulled wine, a Christmas tree display and the Christmas Raffle. I am sure you will be given the opportunity to buy raffle tickets but if not call Gill Howell, Churchwarden (07896 646119) and she will make sure you can participate. Donations to the fund may also be given during the Christmas Tree display event in the church, which will be taking place from the 4th to 10th December. Do call in to admire the trees decorated by the WI, local school, etc.

LAUNCH OF PHOTOGRAPHIC CALENDAR COMPETITION

The Fund Raising Committee are delighted to launch a Photographic Competition, leading to the production of a calendar for 2025. The theme will be "St Leonard's Church through the Seasons."

The competition is open to amateur photographers, who are invited to take photos of St Leonards church in any season - Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer. Submissions of photos will not be required until mid-summer 2024 so, there is plenty of time to photograph the church in one or all of the seasons in its scenic glory.



The best twelve photos from each of the two categories (adults and children) will be made into a 2025 calendar and sold – the proceeds of the sales will go into the Church Roof fund. More details will be given in the coming months but for now please get your cameras out and start snapping to catch the final few weeks of Autumn.

GOOD WILL

So much generosity continues to prevail, with people supporting the many good causes that they donate to year on year, the MacMillan coffee morning to mention just one and the on-going needs, such as the Food-bank.

There are those that are willing to give to new charities because they wish to support the person who was prepared to 'get out of their comfort zone' and do something different.

Debbie from TruCuts is one such person, putting herself forward to complete a one mile swim in the Serpentine in London for Cancer Research UK - please see Debbie's photos and thanks on page 20; another person - brought to my attention by Christina Caldwell is Cliff Alderman who has recently been awarded 'StreetVet of the year.' Please see the article on page 3. And so the list goes on.

What a positive year 2023 has been for Upton residents, so much progress has been made in the many projects that are now close to being completed, including the new Upton Coffee Shop and, after many years of waiting, the new houses in Bondend Lane.

What's been happening in Upton

Posh Afternoon Tea For 'RAISE THE ROOF' - 20th October

We all woke up to Storm Babet on 20th October, torrential rain and flooded roads. It was the 'Posh Afternoon Tea Day' but it didn't deter our spirits to make it a great occasion.



We had lots of cakes, pastries and sandwiches to keep the chat and laughter going. I would like to thank everyone who helped me prepare the room the day before, baked, made sandwiches, waited on tables, washed up and generally made the afternoon go without a hitch.

Also a big thank you to everyone who bought a ticket to the event itself, the raffle and people that simply made donations. The total raised was £1,126 for the Church Roof Fund - an amazing amount!

See page 20 for photographs of the event

Carol Evans

Comedy Night at the BMI

On Sunday 21st October, 100 BMI members enjoyed the latest comedy night compered by Nik Hill.

All three comedy nights this year have been successful and more are planned for 2024. The first of these will take place on Sunday 14th January, from 8pm.



The numbers are restricted to 100, with 90% of the ticket sales added to the BMI Charity for 2023-2024, the Church Roof Fund.

Tickets for the January comedy night are available at £6 per person for BMI members only.

Paula Quinn

Ladies Probus Club

October's meeting was a very interesting presentation and slide show by Roger Coates on the Past, Present and Future of the Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Steam Railway. Roger is a volunteer guard with this local Heritage Steam Railway and told us all about the restoration of this line which was closed by the old British Rail in 1962. It was fortunately saved in the early 1970s by far-sighted volunteers, who also managed to buy some old engines from the British Rail scrapyards at Barry, South Wales, in order to begin the long painstaking task of restoration. Unfortunately, this Heritage Line stops at Broadway, which of course is in Worcestershire, so it doesn't quite reach Warwickshire...yet!



On 15th November we were entertained by the TLC choir before transferring to Bowden Hall Hotel for our pre-booked Christmas lunch, where a good time was had by all.

Bring & Buy Sale!

We are busy preparing our 2024 programme and hope it will be full, varied and interesting for our members.

Please come and join us at the BMI for our first meeting of the year on Wednesday 24th January at 10am, for a Bring & Buy Sale with proceeds towards the Church Roof Repair Fund.

Janet Carr

StreetVet Volunteer Vet of the Year Award



Cliff Alderman, retired local veterinary surgeon in Upton, has won this national award. Followers of our magazine may recall an article about StreetVet in Gloucester a while ago. Cliff started at the inception of outreaches for StreetVet in Gloucester since March 2019.

When asked about receiving this award Cliff was completely shocked but delighted to be nominated and supported by his peers.

StreetVet is a charity that started in 2016 to support the homeless and their pets.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4X53AIMQztM&authuser=0>

If you would like to support StreetVet by purchasing the 2024 StreetVet calendar which celebrates the significance and importance of the human-animal bond please use this link:

<https://www.shop.myfamilyvets.co.uk/products/streetvet-calendar-2024>

<https://www.streetvet.co.uk/>

What's been happening in Upton cont'd

Upton WI report

November was our AGM, chaired by Helen Thorne. Sue Davies' business reports for the past year's activities were read by Secretary Pam Kidgell, followed by Treasurer, Jane Watkis, with her yearly report on finances. Both were thanked for their work and support of the committee.

For planning next year's programme we need a sub-committee with new ideas and Helen invited ladies to consider joining the committee. Notices were given out on the County Quiz for 2024 and all other news was available in the GFWI newsheet. Angela agreed to stand again next year as President.

Our meeting concluded with a selection of films given by Michael Morris, for which he was warmly thanked.

We meet again on Monday, 4th December at 2pm in the Pavilion with a 'Story Teller,' followed by refreshments. All ladies very welcome.

Kathy Quant

Twyver Walk 11th November

It was our turn to host the WI monthly walk on Armistice Day. 48 WI ladies came from the different WIs across Gloucestershire including a partially sighted person with a dog.

There were 2, 4 and 6 mile walks, led by Jackie Hunt (2) Sue Merigold and Jackie Clouting (4 each) and Penny Owen (6).



Twyver ladies waited on the tables and a wonderful display of accessories was put together for raising funds for our WI coffers.



Twyver members gathered at the Village Hall from 8.45 and began erecting and laying out tables and chairs, while our wonderful kitchen team, consisting of

Hazel, Julie, Janet and Julia organised the food for the game walkers who came back exhausted but happy.

Thanks to all those who contributed in muscle power, patience and good humour. Thanks to the ladies of Central Cheltenham WI, Southfield WI, Glevum WI, Dursley WI, Sedgeberrow WI, Horsebere WI, Lydney WI, Woodmancote WI, May Hill WI, Chase WI, Nailsworth WI, Sandhurst WI, The Rissingtons WI and of course Twyver – and all who participated in making this a successful day.

Linda Munnoch

Twyver WI AGM 13th November

We began the meeting with the official business of electing our President for the coming year.

Monica was proposed and seconded and officially appointed. Our panel members of Nicola and Val were willing to stand again and recognised as Secretary and Treasurer. Each read out their summaries of 2023; gosh we did a lot! Nicola confirmed that we had had a successful financial year and the accounts were approved.

Monica, Val and Nicola thanked the committee and members alike for their support. The formalities concluded, the ladies embarked upon the rest of the

evening with Diana Rosewell overseeing our attempts at a wreath making workshop.



Everyone dived into lots of greenery, wire, sparkly bits and berries by the bucketful, with Tracey (pictured) making a rather splendid job of hers! We had a great experience and at the end of the evening had something to take home and show off. It is amazing what you can do with a bit of greenery! The meeting closed after a happy relaxed evening. Our next meeting is 11th December; all are welcome.

Linda Munnoch

What's coming up in Upton

Sunday, 10th December at 3.00pm
Christmas Songs & Carols



with Gloucester Brass
and Upton's very own
TLC Singers

Tickets £10 on the door to include a glass
of mulled wine in the interval

CHRISTMAS FOODBANK

The Foodbank is always in need of contributions and if you would like to donate any items you can either leave them at the Church or at the Village Store.

Most needed items currently are:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Tinned Fruit | Jars of pasta sauce |
| Tinned custard | Single toothbrushes |
| Tinned spaghetti | Toothpaste |
| Tinned vegetables | Shampoo |
| Tinned tomatoes | Toilet rolls |
| Tinned potatoes | Bars of soap |
| Tinned rice pudding | Seasonal goodies |



Raise the Roof The Church Roof Fund

Tickets £1 each

First Prize £100

Other prizes include:

Vouchers for Hatton Court, Bowden Hall, Portway Farm, Tru Cuts,
 Afternoon tea at Prinknash Monastery Cafe

Also, a variety of wines, spirits and a hamper all in time for Christmas!

Tickets are available from Gill Howell

The Raffle will be drawn on 17 December after the Christmas Carol Service



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What's coming up in Upton

Saturday 9th December



**BMI Pensioners
Annual Christmas Lunch
12.00pm**

(Ticketed event which is now full)

Sunday 24th December



**Entertainment Night
with
Bak2Bak
From 8.00pm**

*Event open to BMI members and signed
in guests*

Sunday 31st December

New Year's Eve Entertainment Night



From 8.00pm

Ticketed event @ £15 for BMI members

**COMEDY NIGHT AT THE BMI
SUNDAY 14th - JANUARY 2024
From 8.00pm**

Hosted once again by Nik Hill

Gloucester boy, Silver Stand-up Award Winner at
Leicester Comedy Festival 2022

Featuring

Danielle Johns

This girl can hold her own with anyone and will enthral
any audience with her life experiences

Ashley Frieze

A larger than life character with a different view on the
world,
an accomplished musician with a great voice

Kevin Daniel

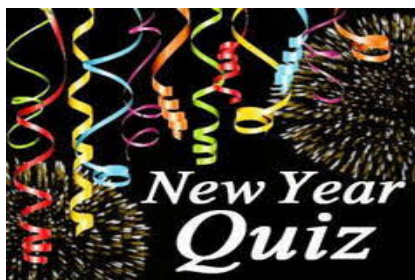
A relative newcomer, who has made sterling
performances at
venues he's played, who took his one man show
to Edinburgh in 2023, and has a reputation for excellent
audience repartee.

**Tickets for sale @ £6 per person for
BMI Members only**

**(90% of ticket sales will be added to the
BMI Charity for 2023-24, Upton St Leonards
Church Roof Fund)**

***Please note, the comedy night may include
adult humour***

Saturday 6th January 2024



Post Christmas/New Year Quiz

From 8.00pm

Please add your name to the booking
sheet on the BMI noticeboard by
Thursday, 4th January 2024

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USL Life Arts Page December 2023

This piece was written for us by *our resident poet, Ted Gardner*. Ted was born in the village and has lived here throughout his long life.

Christmas Then

As a young lad Christmas time meant snow and ice as we nearly always had snow at Christmas. I well remember the days leading up to Christmas making sledges out of any scrap timber we could find, in readiness for the first snow fall.



Some days were spent “wooding” to build up the coal house with logs so that we could enjoy our evenings in the warmth. We looked forward to playing with whatever toys we found in our stockings – Ludo, Draughts, Tiddlywinks and jigsaw puzzles were always around.

We had mince pies and hot chocolate before we went to bed on Christmas Eve. My birthday falls in January and my old Auntie would give me a Christmas box that had to do for my birthday as well – 23 days later! The waiting was something I learned to live with.



As children we spent a lot of time carol singing. We spent every evening the week before Christmas singing around the neighbours' doorsteps, collecting a handful of sweets and a few coppers for our rendition of “Away in a Manger” and “Hark the Herald Angels sing.” The payment was always shared out between our mates; it was part of the Christmas tradition. Sadly, for various reasons, this does not happen today.

Christmas Day was special, stockings to be opened, toys to be examined and assembled. I remember my first clockwork train set. I had extra straight tracks to make an oval circuit and a tunnel made out of an empty Cornflakes box.

Christmas Now

How different it is – we rarely see snow and ice for Christmas. The world is warmer. Sledging still happens when snow falls but do children make their own sledges using offcuts of wood? Boys and girls are seldom seen “wooding” as central heating is here instead. Door to door Carol Singing in the evenings has virtually stopped mainly because of parental fears. I don't want to sound cynical but who wants to cook turkey, sprouts and roast spuds when you can phone McDonalds or Nandos for a takeaway instead of the long cooking of a full Christmas dinner? Perhaps Christmas has lost some of its magic; is this because I am a lot older and perhaps get more pleasure by looking back at my childhood Christmas?

Clockwork train sets can hardly compare with I-Phones, tablets and computers. Who wants to play Ludo when there are Pokemon, Super Mario and other games where one can chase around a screen and shoot at images with the latest action device at your disposal? Past days are gone. Nowadays Christmas cards are rarely sent, instead “Seasons Greetings” are texted and on your Superflip smartphone you can send a picture of your new trainers!



Has Christmas got a future? I wonder. . . .

CHRISTMAS HAIKUS

Now Christmas comes with fewer cards; a text
is not the same as a robin.

No chimney drop for Santa with his sack of gifts;
Amazon is at the door

Ann Morpew



St Leonard's Church

Website

www.uptonstleonardschurch.co.uk



Everyone is welcome to join in our Christmas celebrations and services



We look forward to seeing you



Services for December 2023

Sunday 3 rd	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Celebration Service - Rev Ali Mepham
Tuesday 5 th	5.30 pm	Upton Brownies Christmas Service
Sunday 10 th	10.00 am	Holy Communion - Rev Ali Mepham
		Christmas Tree Festival begins
	3.00 pm	Christmas Concert - with Gloucester Brass & TLC singers Tickets £10 on the door to include a glass of mulled wine
Sunday 17 th	10.00 am	Holy Communion - Rev Gordon Ripley
	3.00 pm	Carol Service - carols and readings, with Children from the School Please join us for refreshments in the Old School Room after the service for the annual Christmas draw of the 500 Club and the Grand Prize Raffle
Wednesday 20 th	9.00 am	Upton St Leonard's Primary School Christmas Service
	10.30 am	Upton Pre-School - Nativity
Sunday 24 th - Christmas Eve	10.00 am	No service
	4.00 pm	Nativity Service - Families welcome - If the children would like to dress up that would be wonderful
	11.00 pm	Midnight Communion Service - Rev Helen McGeoch
Monday 25 th - Christmas Day	10.00 am	Holy Communion - Rev Miriam Davis
Sunday 31 st - New Year's Day	10.00 am	Holy Communion - Rev Marilyn Sharland



Christmas Tree Festival

Please contact Gill from 4th December onwards to have access to the church to decorate your trees



A Debt of Gratitude

Recently on a visit from the Probation Services project 'Community Payback' to work in our churchyard, they informed us that they were celebrating 50 years service to the community. This got me thinking regarding all volunteers and what they do for us here at St Leonard's and in the areas surrounding us. Here at church we are indebted to many forms of volunteering. Firstly the bells that toll out every Sunday morning. Lots of churches don't have this luxury. Then there are the people who greet you at the church door. Our organists, and we are lucky enough to have three, who play for us every service. Our readers and intercessors all volunteer on a regular basis. The ladies that cheerfully serve coffee after the service and last but not least the wonderful team that keeps our church clean so diligently and the

flower ladies who spend time making our church look beautiful.

Our church would not function very easily if we didn't have volunteers to do all these jobs. The churchyard is kept up together by another band of volunteers who have now been joined by the Community Payback team, as we now have maintenance jobs to be done for the winter.

Outside the church and churchyard we are fortunate to have the 'Footpath Team' who keep the village looking tidy and do an enormous amount of work around the village and surrounding areas. Again all wonderful people that just want to help.

All volunteers whoever you are and whatever you do, thank you, you are truly appreciated and valued here in Upton St Leonards.

Gill Howell
Churchwarden

We have been very fortunate to benefit from the Community Payback Team Project who have been regularly helping us out in the churchyard. The team comprise of several men kitted out with all the necessary tools and under supervision who help out with a variety of maintenance jobs around the churchyard. What a difference this has made! They have just marked their 50th anniversary of being set up. We have done our best to make them feel appreciated hoping that despite having made some poor choices in their lives there is time to make amends and maybe we have in some small way helped them to feel valued, encouraging them to make better choices in the future.



Sheila Thomas

On Sunday 5th November the Flourish team led the 10 am service, and keeping in mind it was bonfire night, they told us the story of Moses and the burning bush. Joining them a group of children from Upton St Leonard's Primary School led the prayers, which they also wrote themselves. Everyone enjoyed the service and it was especially nice to see so many families and children in the congregation. Thank you to the Flourish Team for all your hard work; it was much appreciated.



Christmas 500 Club & Grand Raffle

The winner of the £500 Christmas 500 Club and the Grand Raffle prize winners will be drawn after the carol service on Sunday 17th December in the Old School Room where refreshments will be served.

November 500 Club Winners

1 st Prize	£30.00	No.45
2 nd Prize	20.00	No. 50

Many St Leonard's Church people have inevitably been pre-occupied with the building itself and the need to raise money to repair the roof. It is all too easy to equate "church" with the building. Of course, the building is a very visible sign at the centre of the Village of our Christian background and heritage. Not only is it the place where the regular congregation gathers for weekly worship, but it is also where so many come to attend baptisms, weddings and funerals. However, the church is, really, the people, not the building, and we mustn't lose sight of that. God is present in the Village in the lives of the church members, and members of other congregations, even in the lives of people who don't consider themselves as belonging to any particular church. God is not in a building. This is dramatically demonstrated for all to see at Christmas. Jesus, who we call the Son of God, came and lived as a person among people, not confined or attached to any building. He was born in a cattle shed, not a fine architectural gem. He was not very complimentary about the Jerusalem Temple or the traditions and officials associated with it. He said we were to reflect the love of God by loving one another, serving one another. From a hymn we often sing together is the line: "Mirrored here, may our lives tell your story", i.e. God's story must be visible in our lives.



Very many thanks to Neville Howell for designing our new logo

Andy Russell



Remembrance Sunday

On a cold, wet and windy Sunday 12th November the annual service of remembrance was held around the war memorial, Rev Marilyn Sharland led the service as we remembered the brave young men of the village who went off to war and never came back to their homes and families. It seemed poignant that a large gust of wind sent leaves falling from the surrounding trees as the names of the dead were read out loud by the churchwarden, Gill Howell, it brought to mind the falling poppy petals in the Royal Albert Hall. The Scouts, Guides, Brownies were all in attendance with their flags and laid their poppy wreathes. It was lovely to see so many people there, some of whom continued into church for the remainder of the service. An address was given by Mike Stratford. Thank you to everyone who made this annual event a special day.



Raise the Roof **The Church Roof Fund**

For the latest report and amount raised for the roof see page 2.

Churchwarden: Gill Howell

Interment and burial of ashes enquiries

Church Administrator: Jenny Cunningham

Wedding & Batism Enquiries

Sue Downey - Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mother's Union



In November, the Branch enjoyed hearing about the history and work of Sue Ryder with Tamsin Granger, a former Miss Gloucester and Sara Nunn, their Community Fundraising Officer. They were both very informative and entertaining and even stayed on after their illustrated talk to help serve the refreshments and chat with everyone.

Our December meeting will be a Festive afternoon Tea at Norton Garden Centre, Twigworth on Thursday 14th December at 2.30pm. Any member wishing to attend should ensure they have paid their £10 deposit beforehand.

From Saturday 25 November, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and concluding on Sunday December 10, which is Human Rights Day is the 16 Days of Activism against Gender

Based Violence. Throughout this campaign, Mothers' Union will be joining with over 6000 organisations from over 185 countries to raise awareness of and call for an end to gender-based violence and abuse in all forms and in all societies. Gender based violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights. It can affect anyone at anytime, and it takes many forms. It can be part of a damaging cultural norm or hidden behind closed doors; it can be very difficult to ask for help.

NEW VENUE: Please note from January 2024 we will be holding our meetings on the third Thursday of each month (except August) in the School Room, Upton at 2pm. Visitors are always welcome and future meeting details are advertised in this magazine.

Kate Gale – Branch Leader



Children's Corner



On a cold starry night there were shepherds out on the hills, watching over their sheep. Suddenly they were blinded by a bright light in the sky. They shielded their eyes from the strange light.

"Don't be afraid," said an angel. "I am bringing you good News. Jesus, your Saviour, has been born in Bethlehem today. You will find him lying in a manger."

Then there were hundreds of angels, lighting up the dark night sky. "Glory to God who lives in heaven and peace to everyone who lives on earth," they sang.

"We must go and see this wonderful thing that God has told us!" the shepherds said. Then they left their sheep and went to find the baby with the angels' song echoing in their ears.

The shepherds found the baby in Bethlehem, lying in a manger, just like the angel had promised.

Then they told Mary and Joseph and anyone who would listen about the angels and their message that Jesus the Saviour was born! Then they returned to their sheep praising God.



Tower light dedications

Please note the deadline for the Church pages is the 8th of the preceding month

The Tower Lights are sponsored in loving memory of Joe Stubbs, still very much missed by his family and friends.

On 13th December, the Tower Lights are lit in loving memory of Wendy, a loving Sister, Auntie and great-Auntie. So sadly missed and thought about every day. With love from all the family x.

On December 20th, the Tower Lights are lit in celebration of Pauline Sugdon's 80th birthday. Sponsored with love and friendship from Brenda and Roger.

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Memories of Christmas Dinners from Upton St Leonards residents collected by Ann Morpew



There were 16 of us gathered together for Christmas dinner. We had a new cat called Smoky who, probably overwhelmed by the numbers of people, fled up the chimney. He quickly fell down again but was covered in soot which then covered the table all set up for dinner. I was about 5 years old at the time but have never forgotten it.

Angela H

We always had Christmas dinner with our large family in Birmingham. In 2022 I cooked Christmas dinner for the first time in Upton St Leonards. It was a traditional Christmas dinner with many side dishes. We had to borrow extra chairs – there were 30 of us together.

Seeta

One Christmas Day the family were allowed to choose what they would like to eat for dinner – a beefburger, a meal with fish fingers, a rump steak and a gammon steak were chosen. All this did not take long to prepare and cook, the plates were clean and there was not much washing up.

Jen S

My mother lived alone in Yorkshire. She wanted a Christmas dinner with us. We stayed overnight in a borrowed caravan and then drove to Yorkshire. As we put the chicken in the oven there was a power failure. We did finally manage to cook the meal but were then late for our next visit back in the Midlands for a family tea. After a day mostly spent travelling we left for Upton St Leonards and had the best journey ever on a motorway which was practically empty.

Barbara S

One Christmas Day when both the children were young we sat down ready to eat our turkey dinner. My husband brought it in and started to carve – it was black inside. It had certainly looked and smelt ok whilst cooking, but it was certainly bad. We ate the vegetables and all went out for a walk instead.

Margaret S

As a child in Uganda I remember that Christmas was the hottest time of the year. We tried to eat traditional food, but turkey was unavailable. Afterwards we sang carols in the dark with all the others at the Mission. In 2007, after retirement I spent another Christmas in Uganda. This time we went to a Malay restaurant and ate Malay food, no turkey there either!

Andy R

When I was in Durban, South Africa, we spent Christmas Day on the beach. For lunch we had lobster sandwiches. **LM**

When we were near the Chinese Mongolian border the temperature was -40 F. Well wrapped up we walked to the restaurant for Christmas dinner. The restaurant was not heated and neither was the kitchen. Placed before us was a huge cooked but cold River Carp in its entirety – fins, eyes etc. It was very bony and tasted of mud. It was served with rice – also stone cold. Never to be forgotten!

Jo W

One Christmas Day 6 adults (some vegetarian) decided to do something different. Each person cooked a dish of curry, we all met together, put our contributions in the oven to heat up, then cooked the rice, we then served the meal and sat around a lovely round table. The curry was accompanied by naan bread and popadums; we all loved that meal.

I have often thought that the best way to enjoy Christmas Dinner is on Boxing Day! All the cooking has been done. There are loads of leftovers from which to take our pick with added chutney and pickles. There is also the cheeseboard which is probably untouched. Anyone is welcome to add baked potatoes to the feast.

Ann M



USL Climate Action Group Report

The village's Climate Action Group met recently and spent a lot of the meeting discussing an E-bike proposal. This article is to gauge interest in the village from volunteers willing to help run a scheme in Upton (with lots of support) and also from those that would consider hiring an e-bike.



The definition of an E-Bike is, **a bicycle equipped with an electric bike motor to assist you when you're pedalling.** The motor gets its power from a battery mounted on the bike. To classify as an e-bike, the motor has to help **you** rather than propel you on its own.

[Transition Stroud](#), along with Brimscombe-based social enterprise, [The Bike Drop](#), have successfully secured £20,000 to set up a series of e-bike hire schemes in the Stroud District.

The scheme is designed to give local people the opportunity to hire an e-bike, and the funding will enable the installation of community/neighbourhood bike 'pods' in and around Stroud District. These pods will consist of a police-approved cycle store, e-bikes, plus the accessories and utilities necessary to keep them maintained.

Each pod will be located somewhere central in the community and will need a group of volunteers drawn from its locality to run it. Each group of volunteers will determine the exact way in which their pod is run. The pods will be able to retain a proportion of the hire fees. The Climate Action Group has a couple of locations for a pod that are being considered.

The scheme will provide ongoing administration, booking, insurance, maintenance, and volunteer support in partnership with each pod's volunteer group.

There was concern regarding road safety and insurance in particular, but the Group remained interested as the village is close to cycle routes into Gloucester and Cheltenham. The general idea is to give people a chance to hire an e-bike, initially for a short time (day/s) as a



'taster' but in time, if successful, longer hires would be encouraged, and then moving to hire-to-buy schemes.

If you have a potential interest in hiring an e-bike in the future (even if only for a few days a year) or you would be interested in helping to run a scheme as a volunteer, please leave a message for Cliff Alderman.

Abbeydale Garden Club



Arriving in style, wearing a Chinese conical hat and shawl, was our speaker Duncan Coombs, tutor and horticulturist from Pershore College, Worcs. Duncan gave a fascinating slide show and talk on the flowers and vegetation growing at very high altitudes in the Chinese mountains bordering Burma. Stopping at different levels, beautiful flowers were seen growing in harsh conditions. Most striking of all were the brilliant colours of blue, mauve and white, shimmering in the alpine light, finishing with a fluffy plant resembling a puff ball. The evening was enjoyed by all.

Notices were given to remind us of a bring and share supper and also to make a small Christmas display for our next meeting on Monday, 18th December at 7:30pm in the Village Hall. Visitors are always welcome.

Kathy Quant

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DECEMBER

3	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00am
4	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00am
4	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.00pm
4	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30pm
5	Tue	Rubbish and food waste week		
5	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45am
5	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00pm.
6	Wed	Wednesday Probus	BMI	10.00am
6	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	8.00pm
6	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30pm
6	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m
9	Sat	BMI Pensioners Lunch	BMI	12.00pm
10	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00am
10	Sun	Christmas Concert	Church	3.00pm
10	Sun	Copy date for January issue of USL Life		
11	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00am
11	Mon	Coffee Club Christmas Lunch	BMI	12.30p.m
11	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30pm
12	Tue	Recycling and food waste week		
12	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45am
12	Tue	Tuesday Probus	BMI	10.00am
12	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00pm
13	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30pm
13	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30pm
13	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00pm
16	Sat	Christmas Draw	BMI	8.00pm
17	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00am
17	Sun	Carol Service	Church	3.00p.m
18	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00am
18	Mon	Abbeyle Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30pm
19	Tue	Rubbish and food Waste week		
19	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45am
19	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00pm
19	Wed	Wednesday Probus	BMI	10.00am
19	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30pm
20	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00pm
20	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30pm
24	Sun	Christmas Eve Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00pm
25	Mon	Christmas Day		
26	Tue	Boxing Day		
31	Sun	New Years Eve Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00pm

JANUARY

6	Sat	Post Christmas/New Year Quiz	BMI	8.00pm
8	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.00pm
8	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30pm
10	Wed	Copy date for February issue of USL Life		
14	Sun	Comedy Night	BMI	8.00pm
15	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30pm
18	Thu	History Group – “Dyer Edwards” by Richard Wyatt	Village Hall	7.45-9.15pm
20	Sat	Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00pm
21	Sun	Sunday lunchtime Jazz	BMI	1.00-3.30pm
22	Mon	Abbeyle Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30pm
24	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00am
25	Thu	Craft Club	Old School Room	10.00am

FEBRUARY

5	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.00pm
5	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30pm
10	Sat	Copy date for March issue of USL Life		
12	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30pm
15	Thu	Upstagers Production	Village Hall	7.30pm
16	Fri	Upstagers Production	Village Hall	7.30pm
17	Sat	Upstagers Production	Village Hall	7.30p.m
17	Sat	Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00pm

F E B R U A R Y (continued)

19	Mon	Abbeyle Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30p.m
21	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00-12.00pm
25	Sun	Sunday Lunchtime Jazz	BMI	1.00-3.30pm
29	Thu	Craft Club	Old School Room	10.00-12.00pm

Contact Paula Quinn to have an event mentioned in the diary

Weekly courses

This section lists the courses that run every week.

Activity	Day	Venue	Contact	
Yoga	Mondays 10am	Village Hall Annex	Lara Bricknell	07876 764425
Pilates with Sam	Fridays 9.30am	Village Hall Annex	Sam Slatter	07894 757360
Chair-based Pilates	Wednesdays 1.30pm	Pavilion	Angela Harris	
Dance Workout	Tuesdays 7pm	Pavilion	Debra Law	07505 761420
Seniors Fitness	Thursdays 10am	Pavilion	Deb Locke	07738 104404
Tai Chi	Thursdays 10am	Village Hall Annex	Christina Caldwell	
Art Class	Tuesdays 2pm	Village Hall Annex	Christine Hughes	01452 614227

Home-Start Stroud & Gloucester - New Year Volunteering course

'We would very much appreciate it, if you could include the following in your next newsletter which has details of our New Year volunteer training course.'

Home-Start Stroud and Gloucester is a local charity which provides friendship, practical and emotional support to families with young children within our communities. Parenting is not always easy, and to have the support from a trained volunteer is invaluable to many experiencing a difficult time in their lives.



Our next free volunteer training course starts in February 2024, so if you would like to start the New Year in a positive way, have 2-3 hours a week or even a month to spare and could share with someone else your parenting experiences, please get in touch.

Parent quote "Home-Start is a fantastic charity, was really there for me at times of need. The volunteers are well trained and are really handy to have around especially when your child has extra needs, sometimes that different face makes all the difference. Thank you very much!"

For more details and to apply, please see our website www.homestartsd.org or email: Enquiries@homestartsd.org or call the office 01453 297470.

Thank you for publishing, your support means so much.

*Kind Regards
Shelley James
Office Manager*



Advance Notices

Village Hall – Booking Officer required

Here we are nearly at the end of another year and I find myself having to reach out again to the people of our community regarding our Village Hall.

The Hall is a vital part of this community and our close by surrounding areas. It is run as a Charity Trust registered with the Charity Commission. Currently its regular users that provide opportunities for inclusion in community life are as follows: Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Squirrels, Brownies, Rainbows, Drama Club, WI, Art Class, History Group, Camera Club, Garden Club, Badminton, Yoga, Tai Chi, Rabbit Club, Lady Downe Trust, Parish Council office, Sewing Group and of course a daily (7 hrs) Playgroup. Yes, it is a long list isn't it? It emphasises just how important to the community the Village Hall is.

But it doesn't run by itself. There are a number of Trustees whose responsibility it is to make the hall operate. One very important role is that of the booking officer, who not only administers the bookings of all the above a year in advance but also takes and organises the casual weekend bookings; a very important role. The invoices have to be sent out quarterly etc.

Unfortunately, it is getting more difficult to find people to serve the Charity. Currently we have just lost one long serving trustee and will lose more next year. If the Village Hall is to be able to continue into the future for another 100 years folk have to step up and help run it. As you are aware some of us are getting to a point in life where it is no longer feasible to carry on much longer! So, please, Upton folk think seriously about what the closure of the hall would mean and if you are younger and want to contribute to our community, put yourselves forward; it is crunch time folks.

Keith Pearson
Chair of the Trust



Make a note in your Diary now
so you don't miss

The UpStagers next production - a comedy play

"The Hopeful Diamond Caper"

by Patricia Winter & Carl Megill.

Venue: Village Hall 15th, 16th & 17th February 2024

Watch out for posters, Facebook etc for booking details

UPTON ST LEONARDS LIFE

Web site <https://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



Use the postbox at the Village Hall or via the "Contact Us" box on our web page to pass messages to us.

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Carol Evans and her team 'extraordinaire' at the Posh Afternoon Tea. A memorable afternoon for the 'Raise the Roof' Appeal!!



Needles and Pins

The ladies have been very busy making either skirts, dresses or tops since we started back in September. Most of the ladies have now finished and are ready to start with Christmas decorations. To finish off the year we will be making something festive to wear to our Christmas lunch that we are having the last day of term at the BMI with Lorraine looking after us.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone

Lesley Graysmark



Fundraising for Cancer Research UK

On 16 September Debbie from 'Trucuts' swam a mile in the Serpentine to raise money for Cancer Research UK. Donning her wetsuit and braving some chilly temperatures she raised over £520, over 50% of which was thanks to the generosity of the TruCut's clients. Debbie would like to thank all those who supported her and their kindness in her endeavour.

Remembrance Sunday

Thanks to David Brooks and Jim Browne for the photos below



As I stood with the many gathered at our war memorial this year awaiting the bugle call and listening to the names of the fallen being read out in memory, a sudden gust of wind blew the red and gold leaves from the nearby trees and as they began to drift downwards reminiscent of the poppies at the Royal Albert Hall Service of Remembrance, I marvelled at the fitting tribute nature had provided.

Linda Munnoch