

Upton St Leonards Life *incorporating Church News*

Issue 118

June 2024



Here comes Summer!



What does this hand printed number on the churchyard path mean? See Trevor Hall's letter on page 3.

Photo by Andy Russell. See below.

Two ducks float by on one of our local golf courses in May. After all those months of rain, will June bring us sunshine?

Photo by Andrea Dawson. See above.



A special visitor came to Ladies' Probus in April! Prof the Barn Owl will be 20 years old this year.

See page 2.



Rachel and Trevor Hall celebrate 70 years of marriage. See page 10.



RAISE THE ROOF UPDATE

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 raised now stands at approx £164,000. Gift Aid donations recently raised £800, so please continue to Gift Aid your contributions where possible.

We have been fortunate to be awarded £7,750 by the Trustees of the Benefact Trust. This was in response to an application made a few months ago. We have passed our sincere thanks on to them. Other applications have been submitted and we should have more news regarding grants in July.

Fund raising continues with the recent Ukulele Band concert and the TLC raising £1500.

The next major fund raising event will be the Barn Dance on the 29th June – please put the date in your diary and buy your tickets to attend this social family event at Portway Farm:



Posters are up around the village and tickets can be purchased at the Portway Farm Shop, Post Office and online. We'd love to see you there. Please bring a chair and cash spends on the night would be preferred.

As well as a multitude of personal donations, a number of organisations have also contributed to the fund and we would like to give a big thank you to the BMI, 1st Upton Brownies, 2nd Upton Brownie Rainbows, Ladies Probus, Tuesday Probus Group,

Gloucester Guides, Upton St Leonards Post Office, Gloucester Strings Ukulele Group, the Stitchers, Upton Village Hall Committee and Upton Builders to name but a few.

Don't forget that the photographic calendar competition is coming up fast. The theme is "St Leonards Church through the Seasons". So carry on taking photographs to illustrate Summer around the Church. Look out for more information over the coming months.

As ever, we are always on the look out for fund raising ideas and people who are willing and able to organise or help to organise events.

Please contact Richard Sugdon with any ideas.

What's Been Happening in Upton?

LADIES PROBUS What a brilliant April meeting we had when Forest Ranger, Gerry O'Brien, came to present a talk with slides about the History of the Royal Forest of Dean. It was a very interesting talk, mixing history & nature. And we were further treated as this meeting was topped off by an extra special visitor, **Prof the Barn Owl** (see front cover). It was amazing to see such a beautiful relaxed bird with such fantastic soft coloured feathers. Prof will be 20 years old later this year! It was very apparent how deep the bond was between Prof & Gerry.

UPTON WI At the Upton WI meeting in April we had a great time at the movies with Michael Morris and his talk on 'The Good Old Days'. Clips from films dating from 1925 were shown, including Ben Hur, Casablanca, Chariots of Fire - featuring, appropriately for this audience, a performance of 'Jerusalem'. We also saw clips from TV's Mr Pastry and heard oldies from Cliff Richard & The Shadows.

The National Federation asked for voting on a number of possible future campaigns, and we strongly supported "Dental Health Matters", addressing the chronic shortage of NHS dentists. The National Federation will now adopt this and will start lobbying

Our speaker for May's meeting is Steve Tilley who is going to talk about 'Walking the Coast' so that should be a very interesting talk indeed. In June, we have another treat in store when Mags Smith of the Patchwork Basket in Newent is going to talk to us about 'The Foundling Hospital in London in the 18th Century'. The historical background to this subject will be very compelling - I think it might be a case of tissues at the ready though for this meeting! Please come & join us in the BMI at 10am on Wednesday 19 June 2024 to hear all about it!

the government.

Sadly, we heard of the death of Pat Gent at age 95, a very loyal member for many years.

It was also reported that a few of us had enjoyed a lengthy tour of the Javelin, Gloucestershire's state of the art waste-handling facility, which amongst other things is instrumental in the production of energy. Its size, structure and mechanics were awesome.

Our next meeting is on Monday 3rd June, 2pm in the Pavilion, and our speaker will be Roger Coate talking about the Glos /Warks Steam railway. All are welcome.

Notes by Kathy Quant

TWYVER WI MEETING MAY 2024

Warning: this report contains some shocking details and is not for the faint-hearted. Ed.

Meeting on a rainy evening after two days of amazing sunshine didn't dampen our spirits and we began with our Speaker for the evening, Dorothy Cook, Midwife and Public Speaker on Tales of the Midwife. Dorothy started by telling us that being a midwife was nothing like watching BBC's saga *Call the Midwife*!

Dorothy has been in the midwifery world for 44 years, and admitted this service is suffering bad press at the moment. She told us that a report is due, inspections having finished last Christmas. Unfortunate situations happen, such as a case where 16 midwives are due to turn up for work and only 4 arrive. Chaos ensues on the wards.

Nowadays students of midwifery have to pay £10K per year for their training, which is separate from a nursing degree. When Dorothy started out in her career, nursing was the primary objective and then, at the end of that training, they could go on if they wished to specialise, but things have changed. She finds it magical and a privilege to welcome new life, but women lose their voices and confidence in the system and admission rates are going down. There is not enough training especially for emergencies and midwives are there to be the voice of the mum.

She regaled us with tales from the delivery room both funny and poignant – one story took us by surprise, of a lady who was in labour who declared she had just shaken hands with her baby! This had never been heard of, but sure enough, upon examination, the baby's hand was extended and its little sharp nails were scratching her leg. They rushed her to the operating room for an emergency C-section and all went well. Another story involved naming the baby – a nurse thought the name on the tag was Baby Rio – in fact it was Baby Room 10!

Another funny and really remarkable tale involved a lady who asked if sperm could live inside a woman for

16 months – her husband had been in prison and was due to come out, so she was concocting a story. When she was told no, this wasn't possible, she replied: "Plan B then" – we don't know what that plan was, but it would have to have been a good one!

One couple wanted their baby to be born on a white horse – the one on the plains at Chippenham – where it was apparently conceived – so the team obliged by setting up a tent under the stars and the baby came into the world just as they wanted.

Post-natal doesn't really exist now like it used to and things have changed a lot over the years from people keeping placentas to bury in gardens and make drinks - !!! – to one man actually biting off the placenta at his wife's request – she said it was the least he could do.

Dorothy spent time in Oman, in the Middle East, where ancient apothecaries' remedies such as frankincense and myrrh are still used in healing. She was horrified to see all the women in labour who had been subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) at 8 years of age. Some of these women were very young, and had had several babies by the time they were 18. Enemas were made of carbolic soap and water. The same tube was used for each patient and never cleaned. The women would squat to have their babies, so both enema and baby usually came out together causing cross infection. FGM leaves only a small aperture for urine and blood to pass so consequently giving birth for these women is very dangerous and leads to tissue loss and a lifetime of pain and suffering.

To end on a lighter note, after discussing the non-existent and banned use of contraception in that part of the world, we swung back to Glasgow, Dorothy's origins, to the story of a woman who decided to use an empty crisp packet to prevent conception. The mind boggles! Are we so different in our 'civilised' society?

Footnote: Hundreds of women die each year from poor, or lack, of maternal care and knowledge, administration and nursing – it has to change.

Next meeting 8th July all welcome. *Linda Munnoch*

Letter to the editor from Trevor Hall (see pictures on front page)

The concrete path from the Church gate to the Church was put down at the request of the Rev. Peter Jackson, who had complaints from older parishioners in bad weather. He asked me to organise the job. So early that autumn I gathered together some friends and along with Alan Bennett, Fred Ball, Alan Williams and Roger Fry, we laid the path.

As the Church had no account with *Readymix*, I paid on my credit card, but was soon reimbursed by the Church Treasurer. Alan Bennett put the date with his thumb in the wet cement. So now you know! *Trevor Hall*

What's coming up?

Entertainment at the BMI

All events for members and signed in guests unless otherwise indicated

BMI Entertainment Saturday 8th June

"ABBA TRIBUTE"

with

SUMMER NIGHT CITY

From 8.00p.m.

Tickets available for members



£4

Thursday 20th June

Today is "Ladies Day at Ascot"

Why not dress for the occasion and watch the racing at the BMI
Afternoon tea including a glass of Prosecco will be available
which has to be pre-booked (Maximum no. will be for 30)
Tickets £20 for afternoon tea

Saturday 22 June Summer Quiz

@ 8.00p.m at the BMI.

Add your name to the booking sheet in the BMI
by Thursday 20th June

(Maximum number in team is 6. £1.50 per
person, minimum £6 per table)

Saturday 20th July Entertainment Night

with

"Aaron Cook"

from 8.00p.m.

Sunday 21st July

Sunday
lunchtime Jazz
with "Cygnet"
from
1.00-3.30p.m.



And at the Village Hall

On Friday 5th and Saturday 6th July

The Upstagers will present

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&

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Upton Show Saturday 10th September 2024

We are just over three months away from the “Upton Show” so there is plenty of time for you to start planning your entries for this annual event. Schedules and booking forms will soon be available from the “Village Stores” or downloaded from the show’s website uptonstleonardsshow.com. In the meantime, below are details of the classes in handicrafts and photography,

The show is always a popular event for the village, but does rely on help from volunteers. Although we appreciate that everyone has busy lives, we are hoping that we can encourage more volunteers to help set up and clear on the day. During the year we have

HANDICRAFTS

(Award No 10 for the overall winner of classes 140 – 157)
Classes 143 and 144 are to be new and unworn/unused. Competitors tickets to be safety-pinned to article. All entries to be the competitor’s own work. Classes are:

- 140 A soft toy, any medium (Award no 11)
- 141 A tea cosy in any medium
- 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 draught excluder – Any medium
- 147 An article of cross stitch (Please state size and also whether to your own design)
- 148 A handmade Christmas decoration
- 149 An item in crochet
- 150 A fabric corsage made from any fabric or yarn
- 151 A get well card
- 152 A landscape drawing or painting in any medium
- 153 A pen and ink drawing.

approximately 6 meetings where we organise the event, but the team is quite small and again we are hoping that there may be someone out there who would like to join the committee. If anyone is interested please contact Kate Brooks.

We would be grateful to receive donations for the bottle stall and cakes for the refreshments. It would be appreciated if winners from the 2023 show could return their trophies to Paula Quinn before the end of July.

- 154 A portrait (animal or human) in any medium.
- 155 An item made in wood or metal. (Not from a kit)
- 156 A decorated box
- 157 Write a short story of not more than 50 words to include the following: **shell, bird, rhinoceros, curtain, whistle, horizon, disinfectant, elephant.**
£5 prize money for best short story.

PHOTOGRAPHY

(Award No 14 for the overall winner of Classes 160-169)

Unframed colour prints only, digital or film with the exception of Class 168 and 169 which are or black and white prints only.

- 160 Panorama – print not more that 125mm high
- 161 Village Life
- 162 Flora and fauna
- 163 New Life
- 164 A snowy Upton
- 165 Family fun
- 166 From my foreign travel album
- 167 Animal antics
- 168 An iconic building in black and white
- 169 A bridge in black and white

ELECTION RESULTS FOR PAINSWICK AND UPTON WARD

At the District Council elections held on 2 May 2024 the following candidates were elected:

PETER KENNEDY

GARY LUFF

MATTHEW SARGEANT*

All are members of the Green Party

*** Matthew Sargeant is also a member of the Upton St. Leonards Parish Council**

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Rev Helen writes:

June is the season of exams. Whether coming to the end of A Levels or right in the middle of GCSEs, it's a time when young people of certain ages are occupied with a weekly timetable of tests. There will be those young people who feel readily prepared and look forward to the opportunity to share their learned wisdom; those who have crammed much information into their brains in the last few weeks and hope that they've done enough to at least to get a pass; those who don't want to be studying in this lovely weather and will rely on what they know to get them through; and those who really don't have any high hopes at all. There will be those who are anxious and those who are more relaxed. We can all relate to them one way or another and have some experience of being tested ourselves.

Regardless of our opinion of whether these types of examinations are the right way to go, they are in place to assess our knowledge and ability. The outcome of such tests mostly determines our next steps. We will be thinking of everyone as they wait those long weeks before the results are published and hope that you will be surrounded by those who can give wise counsel as to what the next steps might be. Meanwhile, we pray for those with anxious minds to know the peace of God which passes understanding (good job there's no exam on that one) and for all to be assured that they are precious and loved for who they are already. We are all so much more than what exam results tell us. That's something to be thankful for every day.

Young people of Upton St Leonards, we wish you well.

Services for June 2024

2 nd June	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Flourish Service
9 th June	10.00 am	Holy Communion
16 th June	10.00 am	Holy Communion
23 rd June	10.00 am	Holy Communion
30 th June	10.00 am	Holy Communion

Tuesday Morning Prayer

9.30 am
In the Rectory
Bondend Road
Everyone is welcome

The Open the Book team went into St Leonard's Primary School once again in April and told the story of the Two Builders keeping in line with the school value for this term 'Perseverance'.

Val and Kay are showing off their building skills before the house built on sand collapses.



We celebrate a great anniversary here. This could have appeared elsewhere in the magazine, but it is appropriate in this case that we dedicate one of the Church pages to congratulate Trevor and Rachel on the occasion of their Platinum Wedding anniversary.

CONGRATULATIONS *Rachel & Trevor*

On their 70th wedding anniversary.

Rachel has been a 'villager' all her life, having been born in Manor Cottage, living there until she and Trevor married in June 1954 at St Leonard's church.

Rachel & Trevor started their married life in Brockworth, later moving to Longlevens before returning to Rachel's childhood home to care for her ageing mother. It was here they brought up their two sons David and Philip and continued living there until the house and garden got too much to handle and they decided it was time to move. Not moving too far from the house they had both called home for many years they moved into Perry Orchard and found themselves living amongst old and new friends and acquaintances.

The church has always been an important part of their lives, and both still regularly attend church services. It's a rare occasion that the front pew isn't occupied. Rachel, in particular enjoyed the social side of this being the Mothers Union leader for many years, and churchwarden in later years, she also played a key part in holding the church together leading the evening services during one of our many interregnums.

Both Rachel and Trevor belong to the B.M.I and attend many of the functions and entertainment provided, including the Pensioners' Christmas lunch.

So once again to this much loved couple
Happy Anniversary, enjoy this special time with
your family and many friends.



Trevor & Rachel's 5 grandchildren



Ukulele & TLC Evening



Gloucester Ukulele Band made a welcome return to St Leonard's Church on 26th April along with TLC singers .

A lovely evening was had and the music from the band and

choir were enjoyed along with a glass of Pimms. The event was held to raise money for the church roof and with ticket revenue and a donation £1500 was raised.

Thank you to everyone who came along for their help and support to make the evening a success. A special vote of thanks to Jackie Clouting for organising the event.



Who's Who in the Church

Parish Priest:
Rev Helen Champion

Churchwarden:
Gill Howell
Interment and burial of ashes enquiries

Church Administrator:
Jenny Cunningham
Wedding & Baptism Enquiries

Parish Safeguarding Officer
Sue Downey

PCC Secretary
Kay Hutton



500 Club Winners for April

First Prize	£30	No 76
Second Prize	£20	No 38



Tower light dedications

If you or your family wish to sponsor the lights in celebration of a birthday, an anniversary, for a loved one's life or for any other reason then please contact Jenny Cunningham for more details. Please note that the deadline of the Church News is the 8th of the preceding month.

Rachel and Trevor Hall

Love and best wishes Mum and Dad for your Platinum Wedding Anniversary on the 5th June, from Philip & Angela, David & Jenny and the 5 grandchildren

The Church Tower Lights will be sponsored on the 4th June in loving memory of Chris Stock, who died one year ago on this day, from wife Mary, daughter Georgina, son Edward and families

22nd June – Chris Gabb. In memory of a wonderful Husband, Father and Grandfather on his birthday. With much love and so many happy memories, from his loving family



Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union

The Branch welcomed Upton's new Parish Priest, Rev Helen Champion, to the April meeting to tell us "Her Story". She did this using a large variety of items which she distributed amongst those present. As each was returned to her, she used them to illustrate a particular part of her journey from being "Up North" to ending up living in Gloucester and entering the ministry. Her talk was both interesting and amusing and at times extremely poignant and moving and all those present, I am sure, now hold her in high esteem. It was lovely to have some visitors there, please do feel free to come along to any of our meetings, you will be more than welcome. Our newest member, Katie Moore, was elected to the position of Branch Secretary, and I look forward to working alongside her.

We are having our annual outing on Thursday June 20th at 2pm to St Paul's Church, Shurdington. It is a medieval village church set next to the

village green and borders the fields leading away to Cheltenham and Badgeworth. Its most striking feature is the fine broach spire of elegant proportion reaching to 110 feet. The church is thus higher than it is in length! As a smaller intimate building inside it's a special place and the interior features a rare 13th century font and fine 12th century sturdy chancel arch. The Church Warden will be telling us about the history of the building and there are also two "Denny" windows to see, both dedicated to local parishioners exhibiting personal things to look for.

The cost is £4 which includes drinks and cakes served by their Mothers Union Branch and those attending will be using their own transport. There is plenty of parking available alongside the church. Visitors are welcome to join us so please contact me on the number shown below.

Kate Gale – Branch Leader

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Chairman's Report: Cllr Chrissie Castle

This has been another challenging year for the Parish with high inflation and the costs of all services rising. Hopefully, as this report goes out, there will be better times ahead with inflation finally dropping. I would like to thank all the volunteers, both councillors and parish members, who help to keep our wonderful village looking so lovely and things running smoothly.

As more legislation is passed to the Parish Council (PC) for implementation, the workload of our clerk has somewhat increased and to this end we recruited Tracy Slator. She has proved invaluable as an assistant to Roy the clerk who continually works hard to keep us up to date on all things regarding the running of the parish.

We have had to raise our PC charge this year due to all the increased costs for maintaining our building and sports grounds, play equipment, maintenance of Cud Hill, grass cutting, and grants to various village organisations etc. We are considering various projects in the coming year including upgrading our website, as well as making a contribution along with Hucclecote and Brockworth parishes to provide youth provisions in Coopers Edge. We are also hoping to provide 2 Speedwatch cameras for Churchfield Road as traffic increases due to the new houses at Winnycroft. We are also adding information signs at either end of the village on the amenities available for visitors to our area.

As you are all aware, utilities and contractors' fees have drastically risen but we still have one of the cheapest precepts among the Town/Parish precepts in the Stroud District. With a monetary increase of only 33p per week for a band D property we hope to be able to maintain all our current services and keep well within the prescribed budget.

Highways

Meetings have been held with Highways regarding the junction of Bondend with Rance Pitch and Churchfield Road where cars often cut the corner and where it is difficult to cross the road for pedestrians. We have asked for dropped curbs and an official crossing on Churchfield Road but without success so far. We are also attempting to have the potholes filled and roads repaired both on Nuthill and Portway but have been told there is no money left and that is already allocated for 2026/27.

We are fighting this, along with our County Councillor, who has requested a meeting with the senior highways team.

We have also requested dropped curbs to ensure there is a circular route for pushchairs etc. around the village.

Retirements

As I write we are aware that a long serving member of the council, Graham Hayes, has decided to retire after some 41 years on the PC.

His knowledge of the village has been invaluable, having lived here all his life, and we all owe him for his dedication and the time he has given. We wish him well in the future.

Meetings

By the time this report has been issued the elections will have taken place on 2 May and any new members on the parish council will attend the next PC meeting for the first time in May on a date to be announced. All members of the parish are welcome to attend, and the meetings are normally held on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm upstairs in the sports pavilion. The dates are available on both the website and notice boards.

Once again recognition must be given to our volunteers of the various groups who are always looking for new helpers. More young people with fresh ideas are more than welcome. Below you will see reports regarding other aspects of work we do on the Parish Council.

Planning Report: Cllr Keith Pearson

This year was a fairly normal year for planning applications, in fact probably a little less than in recent years. The Council considered 30 applications over the year, in the main these were supported as they were generally acceptable extensions etc. We did have several where the Council felt it was not in the interest of the Parish to support and in most of those cases the District Council was inclined to agree. There were no major applications at all in the Parish during the year, but residents will have noticed that the Bowden Hall Farm development has progressed and at present appears very near completion. Currently 3 dwellings have been sold, plus the 5 affordable homes which are we believe, going to City Homes. The Stroud Local plan is still being considered and if approved does not include any large development plans for Upton Parish. However there are difficulties with the submitted plan due to major road infrastructure being seen as inadequate for the planned sites, this may cause a rethink of the whole plan, we await the Inspector's verdict.

Environment Report: Cllr Peter Wilson

It has been another positive year for Upton with the usual activities supported by the Parish Council.

The day Job

Based on previous reports, you will be familiar with the regular activities supported by your Parish Council (PC). These include grass cutting, monthly paid litter picks, maintenance of the Recreation Ground (including Glebe Field) and much more.

We also lobby people like Highways England, trying to reduce our risk of flooding in certain areas of the village and trying to improve other issues like road safety.

USL Annual Parish Report 2023/24 - cont'd

Another body we work with is Gloucestershire County Council Flood Risk Management Team who have been doing a lot of upstream improvement work. This has had positive effects downstream but there is still more work to do.

There is always an ongoing focus on how we can improve the village and are currently reviewing a number of ideas submitted to the council for consideration.

Our local newsletter, USL Life, continues to provide an important communication link between the PC and village residents with such things as road closures, any work with government agencies and how we try to improve Upton by asking for views. We provided a grant in December 2023 to ensure USL Life covered its expenses during the year.

My usual thanks go to Roy Balgobin (Parish Clerk) who works hard in the background to provide advice to councillors and helps make many of the things mentioned happen each year. He is now ably helped by Tracy Slator who joined the council in October 2023.

Thanks to the Footpath Team

We are very grateful for the hard work of the Footpath Team, who, in addition to their core work, help repair, maintain and prepare the Cud Hill area so cattle can be placed there to control growth and allow certain plants/flowers to flourish. The cattle will already be at Cud Hill as you read this report. The team's work makes a valuable contribution to our agreement with Natural England on how we manage Cud Hill and in turn we receive a small grant each year which contributes to the associated costs incurred.

The village volunteers who make up the footpath team have done their usual great job of keeping our network of footpaths maintained and usable by all in Upton and many who travel into Upton to enjoy the lovely countryside that surrounds our village.

They also organise occasional litter picks (over and above the regular ones funded by the parish council) where local volunteers help to keep Upton looking tidy.

What has happened in the last 12 months

A snapshot of things that have been supported by the parish council in the last 12 months is shown below: -

1. Continued to look after the trees planted on the Glebe Field (supported by helpful dog walkers who keep an eye on them)
2. Named the owl on the village green through residents' ideas (Ollie was successful!!)
3. We have tried very hard to get Highways to help Upton with a number of issues such as flooding prevention, road safety, ANPRS (automatic number plate recognition systems) and poor road surface conditions e.g. Portway and Nut Hill. We have essentially been faced with a lack of funding which has frustrated our efforts as a council but we continue to push

4. Supported a village Climate Group to see what we can do collectively as a village to minimise our impact on the wider global climate (3 parish councillors are members and 2 residents). You will have seen a number of articles in USL Life advising on things like saving money, using repair cafes, encouraging an e-bike hire scheme (no interest was shown) and effective recycling (over and above the district council's arrangements) to name a few. The climate group is currently developing a biodiversity policy which will inform everything we do to support our local environment. This will be shared with residents when completed and agreed by the parish council

5. Provided financial support to the village newsletter team (USL Life) to close the gap on advertising revenue received and annual operating costs incurred

6. Asked village residents for ideas to improve the village. They are being considered by the council and any decisions and progress will be communicated through our newsletter

In summary, my usual thanks to council colleagues, Roy and Tracy and all the volunteers who really make a difference around our village across many activities through the year. They all make a difference to the environment we live in and make Upton such a nice place.

Recreation Report: Cllr David Hunt

We have all experienced the consequences of a record rainfall over the past few months, with highway flooding, soggy lawns and impassable field paths. Not surprisingly, the Recreation Ground has been badly affected on occasions, with football games postponed and now our cricketers wondering if the new season will be delayed. Hopefully a drier spell of weather will be coming our way but in the meantime, works (micro drilling) have recently been undertaken, to improve the soccer pitch drainage, and a major overhaul of pitch drainage is proposed for which a grant is now being sought.

Our local football team merged with Robinswood Athletic at the end of the 2023 season and the future of the club is looking good with a positive family vibe being widely enjoyed. The club has recently been awarded Accredited Club status by the F.A. acknowledging that the club is well run and efficient. As the season closes, after a poor start, our local 1st team is now picking up points and hoping to avoid the relegation zone. The reserves have been relegated with one game to play but they have made it to a cup final. U16s have had a good season and are hoping for runners-up spot with two games to play. U13s have enjoyed a fantastic season, undefeated and top of their league with a Cup Final on the 27th April.

The cricket season is about to commence - whatever the weather!. Good news is that cricket only suffered 5 rain cancellations in 2023 and many clubs were worse off! During the last season Upton hosted 17 adult home games and 21 youth games. Coopers Edge played 5 games here.

USL Annual Parish Report 2023/24 - cont'd

The club now has 2 adult Saturday teams and youth teams in the U9/U11/U13 and U15 groups. There is an adult game played every Wednesday with Sunday friendlies now and then. Do come and watch!

Our tennis hardcourts may be less affected by ground conditions but clearly members would also welcome a drier climate. From a total club membership of 60, Club mornings are well attended. The Club had a very good 2023 with Ladies Doubles promoted to Division 3 in the forthcoming Dunlop Glos. Summer League. The Mixed Doubles also achieved a Winter League promotion to Division 3, and we now have a 2nd team entered in the Men's League. With drier weather the Club will be replacing the court side hut, with court repainting planned for May.

The Petanque Club is also weather sensitive and on occasions the 'piste' has been waterlogged after heavy rain. The new season starts soon with the Early Bird Competition. Club games take place on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 1.30pm. A team plays local clubs in the Cotswold League and the club holds internal tournaments (Keith Smith Trophy and Yorke Shield) The Club invites new members to come and join in what is a fun game with gentle exercise. Spare 'boules' are available for anyone wishing to give it a try.

All clubs are inviting new members and contact details can be obtained from the Parish Clerk or from the club websites.

Our Pavilion is due for further maintenance, including external painting, when the weather permits. In this respect I would like to thank club volunteers for their valuable assistance with pavilion and grounds maintenance generally, over the past 12 months.

Finally, a special 'thank you' to Andy Russell for all his work in helping to maintain our Pavilion.

Allotment Report: Cllr Mary McLachlan

Both sites are mostly doing well in general. David Fleming has taken on the role as Allotment Manager for Perry Orchard and is doing a fantastic job. We hope to be sorting out the boundaries between plots as soon as the weather permits so they can be better defined as to what they are i.e. full or half plots. There are a few plots on Stanley that need a good tidy up and we are still trying to keep the manure heap under control so it doesn't spread onto the car park area. Hopefully this will be a project for the summer and when the weather improves! My sincere thanks to both David Fleming and Peter Macey for the tremendous amount of work they undertake as Voluntary Allotment Managers.

Coopers Edge Report: Cllr Matt Sergeant

Over the past year, Coopers Edge has suffered an increase from anti-social behaviour that has resulted in damage to the community centre and various children's parks within the parish. There have also been threats to residents. Parish councillors from Upton, Hucclecote and Brockworth parishes have worked with Stroud District Council, Bromford Housing Association and the Police to address these issues. This has resulted in three teenage perpetrators having served

community service orders under police observation. It is worth noting that two of the three teenagers are not residents of Coopers Edge. Working with the police has seen a detention order covering the community centre to address any future anti-social behaviour occurring in that vicinity.

As a result of the anti-social behaviour the community centre has removed elements of the building that could be climbed or used to damage other property. Whilst this has resulted in a cost being incurred by the community centre, I am pleased to report that the centre is in a good financial position and has continued to see growth since lockdown restrictions were removed. Utilisation of the centre remains high. We have seen a new church form and use the centre and we held our first Upton parish council meeting in March 2024. Deli Edge remains a destination eatery which has helped attract footfall to the centre.

The Community Trust has facilitated a variety of community events throughout the year, with highlights being a Christmas and Summer event that included free children's activities, craft stalls for independent traders and visits from Father Christmas and Micky Mouse!

There is due to be public art installed around Coopers Edge, and I would like to thank Cllr Hunt for his involvement in ensuring the display boards will reflect the aviation history linked to the area.

Whilst not in the parish or district, the sports facilities went out to tender by Tewkesbury Council. The successful bidder for the site was Barnwood United. At present it is not clear when the site will be operational.

The allotments have yet to be transferred to the Coopers Edge Trustees ownership by Stroud Council, however an allotment committee has been formed. I would like to thank the parish clerk for the advice he provided to community trustees to help facilitate the formation of an allotment committee.

Gauntlet Road/Sapphire Way remains in poor condition due to the developer not having done appropriate works to enable the road to be adopted. I would like to thank County Cllr Sue Williams for providing clarification as to who was ultimately responsible for the condition of the road as it has helped local residents understand the issue.

We still have a vacancy on the Parish Council

The basic requirement is to attend 11 meetings per year (there are no meetings in August) and people from all backgrounds are very welcome and this improves our debate and decisions.

If you wish to discuss, please contact the Parish Clerk on email: usclerk@btinternet.com or pop into the village hall for a chat about what is involved.

JUNE

2	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
3	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
3	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30p.m.
3	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.00p.m.
4	Tue	Tuesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
4	Tue	Recycling and food waste week		
4	Tues	Needles & Pins	The Old School Room	9.45a.m.
4	Tues	Tennis Club Members Evening	Tennis Courts	6.00p.m.
4	Tues	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
5	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
5	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.
5	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
8	Sat	Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00p.m.
9	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
10	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
10	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
10	Mon	Copy date for July issue of USL Life		
11	Tue	Rubbish and food waste week/Garden waste for those with brown bins		
11	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
11	Tue	Tennis Club Members Evening	Tennis Courts	6.00p.m.
11	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
12	Wed	Wednesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
12	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
12	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
12	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.
16	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
17	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
17	Mon	Abbeydale Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30p.m.
18	Tue	Recycling and food waste week		
18	Tue	Tuesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
18	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
18	Tue	Tennis Club Members Evening	Tennis Courts	6.00p.m.
18	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
19	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
19	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
19	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.
19	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
20	Thu	Televised Ladies Day @ Ascot	BMI	1.00p.m.
22	Sat	Summer Quiz	BMI	8.00p.m.
23	Sun	Tennis Club Members Morning	Tennis Courts	10.00a.m.
24	Mon	Coffee Club	BMI	10.00a.m.
25	Tue	Rubbish and food waste week/Garden waste for those with brown bins		
25	Tue	Needles & Pins	Village Hall Annex	9.45a.m.
25	Tue	Tennis Club Members Evening	Tennis Courts	6.00p.m.
25	Tue	Badminton	Village Hall	8.00-10.00p.m.
26	Wed	Wednesday Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
26	Wed	Upstagers Amateur Dramatics	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
26	Wed	Bell Ringing Practice	Church	7.30p.m.
26	Wed	Bingo	BMI	8.00p.m.
27	Thu	Craft Club	The Old School Room	10.00-12.00p.m.
29	Sat	Barn Dance	Farm Shop	6.00p.m.

JULY

1	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.30p.m.
1	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30p.m.
5	Fri	Two One Act Plays by the Upstagers	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
6	Sat	Two One Act Plays by the Upstagers	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
8	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30p.m.
10	Wed	Copy date for August issue of USL Life		

15	Mon	Abbeydale Garden Club	Village hall	7.30-9.30p.m.
17	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
18	Thu	History Group – AGM and talk on Margaret Malden By Edward Wyatt	Village Hall	7.45-9.15p.m.
20	Sat	Entertainment Night	BMI	8.00p.m.
21	Sun	Sunday Lunchtime Jazz	BMI	1.00-3.30p.m.
25	Thu	Craft Club	The Old School Room	10.00-12.00p.m.

AUGUST

5	Mon	Upton WI	Pavilion	2.30p.m.
5	Mon	Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion	7.30p.m.
10	Sat	Copy date for September issue of USL Life		
10	Sat	Pig Roast	BMI	8.00p.m.
12	Mon	Twyver WI	Village Hall	7.30 p.m.
14	Wed	Ladies Probus	BMI	10.00a.m.
19	Mon	Abbeydale Garden Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30p.m.
26	Mon	August Bank Holiday		
29	Thu	Craft Club	The Old School Room	10.00-12.00p.m

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
Art Class	Tuesdays 2pm	Village Hall Annex	Christine Hughes	01452 614227
Dance Workout	Tuesdays 7pm	Pavilion	Debra Law	07505 761420
Chair-based Pilates	Wednesdays 1.45pm	Pavilion	Angela Harris	
Yoga	Wednesdays 6.30	Village Hall	Kat Hill	07507 971578
Tai Chi	Thursdays 10am	Village Hall Annex	Christina Caldwell	
Pilates with Sam	Fridays 9.30am	Village Hall Annex	Sam Slatter	07894 757360
Seniors Fitness	Fridays 10am	Pavilion	Ian Preston	07306 334222

A Village Hall Stalwart Steps Down

I am sure that everyone in Upton who joins in with the village social life knows Mike Stratford. I first met him around 30 years ago or so. At that time he was the Chairman of the Village Hall Trust from 1989 to 1997, a role I have been fulfilling for many years myself, so I know just how much commitment it takes. In 1991 Mike oversaw the building of the Lady Downe annexe, a fine addition to the existing Village Hall, which has certainly enhanced the Hall's fortunes ever since.

Even after stepping down from the Chair, Mike continued to support the hall in many ways, remaining a Trustee and later actually being the Parish Council appointed Trustee. Each year for many years, the schoolchildren from Upton have held their Junior Quizzes in the Hall every May, all with great input from quizmaster Mike. He has also had a long term commitment to the Spring Show.

Apart from that, Mike also runs the USL History Group, which meets in the Hall bi-monthly. With regard to history, he has often been seen at Shows and Village Days presenting history exhibitions, such as remembering the soldiers of the First World War and he even slept over one night at the Hall to protect certain exhibits which were of particular importance to their owners. For me, Mike has been often the font of knowledge to go to for help about the Hall's history and so forth. Mike, you will be sorely missed.

Keith Pearson

Obituary

We are sad to report the death of Ginny Ring on 21 April 2024. Virginia Davis, also known as Ginny and Jane) was born in 1946. She lived with her parents and older sister, Susan, in Prinknash Abbey Lodge on Portway. Her grandparents lived in Bondend Cottages. Ginny attended Park School in Spa Road and Ribston Hall School. She enjoyed amateur dramatics and had a beautiful singing voice. With the GODS – Gloucester Operatic and Dramatic Society – she played the lead in many performances e.g. Sound of Music, Hello Dolly and My Fair Lady. She married Ron Ring and they lived in Georgian Close where their daughter, Samantha, was born. In 2018 Ginny moved to Perry Orchard and later she went to a retirement flat in The Docks. She suffered for many years with cancer and was always very positive and cheerful. She died in Sue Ryder Hospice after receiving wonderful care there. We offer sympathy to Samantha Webster and her family.

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

Andrea Dawson



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Gloucestershire Prepares for D-Day “The Longest Day”

Preparation and planning had been under way for more than two years. The arrival in this country of thousands of American troops signalled something big was about to happen. Areas of the country became even more restricted than before. American troops camped in Cranham Woods, an emergency hospital was built in Cheltenham. Roads to the south coast were jammed with military vehicles. The railways were expanded with new marshalling yards, the line between Gloucester and Cheltenham was increased to four tracks. The many airfields in Gloucestershire were receiving new aircraft and gliders.

Invasion rehearsals took place, including a beach landing at Slapton Sands Dorset on 30th April 1944, which went terribly wrong when American landing ships were attacked by German torpedo boats. The exercise was called *Tiger* and 946 Americans died. The whole thing was kept secret and their next of kin were told they died in action. They did not know the exercise was preparation for a landing on Utah beach.

Those taking part did not know their destination until 48 hours before they boarded their ships or planes. They were then forbidden to leave camp or communicate with anyone. Due to a very well planned deception the Germans knew an invasion would come at some time but they did not know where. Crossing the channel from Dover was the obvious place, but the French ports were too well defended, so the largest invasion fleet in history was to head for Normandy.

First to land would be the glider and parachute troops, they would leave from numerous airfields, some in Gloucestershire:

- Aston Down saw gliders, which had tail sections made locally by Taylors Limited of Griffiths Mill, Bowbridge. This airfield remained under MOD control until 2002, it has since been sold to the Cotswold Gliding Club.
- Down Ampney was used by Dakotas towing gliders in the early hours of D-Day. The airfield closed in April 1946.
- Fairford in the early hours of D-Day 45 Stirlings took off with paratroops to land and hold bridges over the River Orme. After the war it was used as the BAC Flight Centre, the home of Concorde 002. It is now the home base for USAF B-52 bombers, U-2s and B-2s. It is also the home of the worlds largest air show.
- Moreton Valence was used as a training and refresher unit. In 1943 hangers were built for by Gloster Aircraft Company to house aircraft flown from Brockworth, before being ferried by female pilots to operational stations. The last aircraft left the airfield in July 1962, which was a Javelin. The M5 motorway now runs down the main runway.
- Kemble in May 1944 C-47 aircraft arrived to collect Horsa Gliders to carry American troops. In 2000 the airfield was sold by the MOD to Kemble Heritage Group.
- South Cerney was a training base and used as a dormitory station for Brize Norton. On 1st July 1971 it became the Duke of Gloucester Barracks of 29th Regiment of the Royal Logistic Corps.

The scale of Operation Overlord can be seen when the following airfields are also included – Bibury, Filton, Northleach, Staverton, Moreton-in-Marsh and Little Rissington. All these airfields were made ready for the invasion which was planned for the 5th June.

This was cancelled until the 6th June due to bad weather over the channel. Once landed the allies and the Germans knew the first 24 hours would be critical to halt the invasion. The German Commander of the Atlantic Wall, as they called it, was Field Marshall Erwin Rommel. Due to the bad weather he thought the invasion would not take place so he had gone home to Germany for his wife’s birthday, as a present he had bought her a pair of shoes in Paris

Rommel realised that where ever the invasion came the first 24 hours would be “DER LANGSTE TAG” – “THE LONGEST DAY”.

Mike Stratford.

