

The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter No 292

Village Diary

December 2007

- 7th Christmas Bazaar, The School, 3pm-5pm*
- 9th Family Communion, St. Paul's Church, 10am*
- 9th Baptism, St. Paul's Church, 12.30pm*
- 10th Parish Council Meeting, The School, 7.30pm*
- 14th School Christmas Celebration Rehearsal, St Paul's, 1.45pm*
- 14th Mobile Library, The Glebe, 2.15pm-2.25pm*
- 16th Carol Service, St. Paul's Church, 6.30pm*
- 17th Senior Citizens' Carols & Mince pies, The School, 2.00 pm*
- 19th School Christmas Celebration, St Paul's, 6.30pm*
- 25th Family Communion, St. Paul's Church, 10am*
- 28th Mobile Library, The Glebe, 2.15pm-2.25pm*

January 2008

- 11th Mobile Library, The Glebe, 2.15pm- 2.25pm*
- 13th Holy Communion, St. Paul's Church, 10am*
- 14th Parish Council Meeting, The School, 7.30pm*
- 15th Deadline for February's Mouthpiece*
- 20th Evening Prayer, St. Paul's Church, 6 pm*
- 25th Mobile Library, The Glebe, 2.15 pm-2.25 pm*

Services of Worship

December 2007 – January 2008

DATE	TIME	PLACE	SERVICE
SERVICES IN CULHAM - DECEMBER			
Sunday 9th	10am	Culham	Family Communion
	12.30pm	Culham	Baptism
Sunday 16th	6.30pm	Culham	Carol Service with wine & mince pies
Christmas Day	10am	Culham	Family Communion
SERVICES IN JANUARY			
Sunday 13th	10am	Culham	Family Communion
Sunday 20th	6pm	Culham	Evening Prayer
<i>Join us for a chat and coffee after morning services at Culham Church! All Welcome. Also, come along to informal prayers with Revd Anne Ilsey on Thursday mornings, 8.15 – 9.00 am</i>			
SERVICES IN CLIFTON HAMPDEN & THE WITTENHAMS			
DECEMBER			
Sunday 2nd	8am	Clifton Hampden	Holy Communion
	10am	Long Wittenham	Advent Christingle
Sunday 9th	8.30am	Little Wittenham	Holy Communion
	10am	Clifton Hampden	Holy communion
Sunday 16th	10am	Long Wittenham	Holy communion
Thursday 20th	2pm	Long Wittenham	Pram Service
Sunday 23rd	10am	Clifton Hampden	Crib Service
	11.30am	Long Wittenham	Baptism
	6pm	Clifton Hampden	Carol Service
Christmas Eve	6pm	Long Wittenham	Carol Service
	6pm	Little Wittenham	Carol Service
	11.30pm	Clifton Hampden	Midnight Communion
Christmas Day	10am	Long Wittenham	Holy Communion
JANUARY 2008			
Sunday 6th	8.00am	Clifton Hampden	Holy Communion
	10.00am	Long Wittenham	Family Service
Sunday 13th	8.30am	Little Wittenham	Holy Communion
	10am	Clifton Hampden	Holy Communion
Sunday 20th	10am	Long Wittenham	Holy Communion
Thursday 24th	2pm	Long Wittenham	Pram Service
Sunday 27th	10.00am	Clifton Hampden	Family Communion
	6.00pm	Long Wittenham	Evening Service

Talking Point**Sue Booy**

One of the excitements of Advent in many households is the Advent calendar. Each window that is opened reveals something – hopefully a chocolate! But of course chocolate Advent calendars are a very new tradition. Glitter was the popular accessory for superior Advent calendars when I was small as well as a very big window with the number 24 on it which we just knew would contain a crib – but the bigger the window, the more likelihood there was of a full nativity picture. Whatever is actually behind the windows, the most important thing is that something is revealed.

Advent and Christmas are seasons of revelation. It is the time when in Christian tradition we celebrate the fact that God, who had always seemed far away and incomprehensible, chose to become like us in Jesus: a human being whose birth and life helps us to see more clearly what God is like.

We often talk about ‘the message of Christmas’ in a rather glib and shorthand way, but, truth to tell, the circumstances of Jesus’ birth as they have been told over generations reveal all kinds of messages. That birth, in a stable attended by outcast shepherds and astrologers, tells us that God is to be found in unexpected places and amongst all kinds of people. That birth, welcomed by mysterious attendants whom we have called angels, whispers that humble, ordinary and down-to-earth this child might be, but... still... there is something quite different, as well as just the same about this baby.

This is the mystery that attracts us when it comes to Christmas – when we see or hear the story of the nativity presented for us. It is never without that sense of awe because somehow in a way that is at once as simple and as complicated, as earthy and as mysterious, as the birth of a newborn child. Yet more so. And the news of that birth is to be spread even more far and wide than the news of any baby born to human parents today. The shepherds and the wise men returned to their communities to share what they had seen and learned. The final and perhaps the most important part of the message of Christmas is that it is to be shared - at Christmas and into the year to come.

Village News**Greetings from the Mouthpiece!****The Editors**

We wish all our readers and contributors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and thank all those who deliver or advertise in this newsletter for their support in 2007.

Church Services

Please note we have omitted Dorchester Abbey services from the above table, otherwise it would have been twice as long. For services at Dorchester, please see The Bridge parish magazine or email brian@thebrachers.com for the original complete list.

At St Paul’s Church in Culham, everyone is welcome to celebrate Christmas with a **Carol Service** at **6.30 pm** on **Sunday 16th December**, followed by **mince pies and wine**.

On **Christmas Day** itself, there will be a **Family Communion Service** at **10 am**.

Culham Pre- School**Lea Allmond**

There is an easy way to help us raise much needed funds. If you order goods via the internet, you can register at www.easyfundraising.org.uk. You choose a charity (Culham Pre-School) and when you buy online from major companies such as Next, Amazon, Ebay, Woolworths, etc they will give a percentage to us at no extra cost to you. That money will then go on to benefit the children at both the Pre-School and School. Please remember us when you next do your shopping online.

We shall be holding a Christmas Bazaar with the main School on **Friday 7th December**, please come along and see us.

Culham Parochial School**Sue Knox**

Christmas Celebrations please put the following dates in your diaries:-

School and Pre-School Christmas Bazaar will be held on **7th December 3pm-5pm**. There will be stalls, games, Father Christmas in his grotto and lots more fun.

There will be a "Carols and Mince Pie" afternoon on **Monday 17th December** for senior citizens and grandparents, at **2pm**. Our Christmas celebration will be held in Culham Parish Church on **Wednesday 19th December** at 6.30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend the rehearsal for this in the church on **Friday 14th** at 1.45pm.

Aluminium Can Collection

Some time ago parents and friends had a regular aluminium can collection, the proceeds of the sale going to benefit the school. I am re-establishing the collection and also expanding it. The collection will include:-

- 1 Crushed aluminium
- 2 Aluminium food containers and foil (clean please)
- 3 Scrap copper
- 4 Scrap brass

Please do not mix the different materials.

The first collection will take place on Friday 15th December. Remember all proceeds of the sale will go to the school, so please get collecting!

Age Concern	Beverly Mason
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A Local Link with Age Concern Oxfordshire

My purpose in writing is to introduce myself as a Local Link volunteer with Age Concern Oxfordshire. It is one of the aims of this organisation to ensure that all older people know that if they are in need of information, advice or help, they can turn to Age Concern. The Local Link project is central to achieving this aim, in the more remote communities as well as the towns and city. Local Link volunteers are a local point of contact, an *easy way in* to Age Concern and the services it provides, through a friendly local face.

Although the general aims of Age Concern are probably well known, not everyone is aware of the full range of services they can offer — in particular, the Information and Advice service which holds a store of information on all manner of issues of interest and concern to older people. Want to know about benefits entitlements, about where you can holiday in a wheelchair, about how to arrange a telegram from the queen? Age Concern can help.

As the Local Link in **Culham**, it would be a great help if you could ensure that older people with whom you come into contact know that I am here to help. Do you know any older people who may benefit from Age Concern's services? I am happy to come and introduce myself and give a short talk about the Age Concern Local Link project if you think that might be helpful. Please do not hesitate to call me on **01235-530471**.

Any help or suggestions you can make would be much appreciated.

Sutton Courtney WI	F. Hayden
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Despite building up for Christmas we are taking time out to sing Christmas Songs in the Oxford Town Hall, and spending an evening at our next meeting on the 18th December to listen to Mel Rees on 'Brought to Book – That's Life.'

Then it's on to the New Year when we will plan our evening meal and Dudley Iles will tell us of the 'Secret Lives of Garden Birds. This will take place on Tuesday 15th January 2008.

As always we will be pleased to welcome visitors. Meetings start at 7.30pm.

Parish Council Notes	November 2007
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A presentation was made by Eleanor Taylor, Communications Executive of the Thames Water Reservoir Team concerning an update on progress as part of the statutory consultation exercise. Essentially a further level of 'consultation' has been introduced to the system with government introducing a mandatory Water Resources Management Plan. There was a pre-draft WRMP meeting with industry regulators in May 2007 and there will be a further opportunity to comment on the draft WRMP in Spring 2008 before a report on feedback from the WRMP in Autumn 2008.

PC has not received a reply to the letter concerning the ABITS scheme. We will write again and also invite the planning officers from the Vale to discuss the scheme and its consequences.

The playground fencing will be removed after accepting a tender from BCC. It was also agreed to go ahead and spend around £15,000 on the playground refurbishment. PC has received a gift of £550 from UKAEA towards the project.

A donation of £50 was made to the Oxford Association for the Blind.

The Oxfordshire Record Office will take and store many of the Parish's records which currently reside in a large filing cabinet and several boxes. The PC will retain ownership.

At a recent meeting of the Jet Site Stakeholders group, it was suggested that the resurfacing of the causeway between Maud Hales Bridge and the Colmoor farm entrance did much to enhance the cycle path. It was pointed out that this was in fact a footway, not a cycle track and that cyclists should not be using it. The cycle track starts/ends on the east side of the Colmoor farm entrance. PC will request improved signage to reiterate this and will write to OCC with concerns about upgrading the ancient monument to a 'dual use' pathway which was proposed at the JSSG meeting.

From Pamela Tomlinson, District Councillor

SODC has now gained 'excellent' status rating.

Pamela will look into the problem of bus passes issued by SODC not being accepted in the VOWH area.

There is a proposal to have weekly food waste kerbside collections using a new type of bin to be distributed to householders. There is likely to then be a bi-weekly collection of residual, non recyclable waste. A kerbside glass collection service is also being considered.

Dates of next two meetings:

Mondays, 10th December 2007 & 14th January 2008, at 7:30 pm in the School.

Tree Warden Scheme	SODC and Parish Council
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The Council's Forestry and Countryside service are undergoing a review of the pilot Tree Warden scheme which covered the areas of Henley and Watlington. The review will judge the success of the pilot scheme and determine if it could be expanded throughout the district.

It would therefore be helpful if you could indicate if your Parish or Town is interested in being part of the Tree Warden scheme, if you have previously supported the scheme and nominated Tree Wardens I would also like you to confirm your interest by Wednesday 31 October 2007.

Background information

The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative founded by the Tree Council. It enables people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woodlands.

Tree Wardens are volunteers who have an interest in the trees in their local environment. They do not have to be tree experts because relevant on-going training will be provided by the Council. Tree Wardens will act as the 'eyes and ears' of the Council's Forestry & Countryside

section within the local community and their roles will involve:

- * Gathering information: Undertaking surveys of local trees, so as to develop ideas for projects, discovery where practical help and advice is needed, and become aware of threats to trees that may need bringing to the attention of the local authority.
- * Protecting trees: Informing the Council of threats to trees, helping to ensure compliance with Tree Preservation Orders and planning consents. Report vandalism to newly planted trees, and look out for trees showing signs of disease, or becoming dangerous through decay.
- * Community liaison / involvement: May be asked questions on what species to plant, how to deal with a damaged tree, tree planting and aftercare. Organising, or encouraging others to organise, practical projects such as tree planting for National Tree week or woodland management.

Clearly we have missed the October deadline but don't let that put you off. If you are interested in the above please contact either the Parish Clerk or any Parish Councillor

Thank you - Culham Parish Council

Newington Nurseries	Anne Hendry
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Deck the Halls

Deck the halls this year! It's the holly and the ivy, door wreaths, table decorations, doorstep planters and patio pots that bring the real sense of the season, along with our all-time favourite, the Christmas tree. You could add to the enjoyment by getting into living decorations and gifts. Spruce (*Picea*) and Christmas rose (*Helleborus*) make the perfect partners for creating decorative Christmas magic in the garden or on the patio.

Let's look at real, living trees for Christmas first. These come in all shapes and sizes from the towering Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens*) at 15m to its baby brother 'Montgomery'. This slow-growing shrub variety is more suited to the kind of garden most of us have with its neat dimensions (1.5m height as likely mature size). Smaller species and varieties are ideal for container growing whilst if you have the space, the big ones make fabulous specimen trees. A clump or line of them provides year-round shelter, as well as giving the winter garden an honest breath of nature. Snow bearing down on spruce boughs in winter is always a delightful sight that makes you feel especially cosy when you're wrapped up warm.

The true Christmas tree, the Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) can reach up to 40m in height, given ideal growing conditions, but *Picea abies* 'Ohlendorffii' is the complete opposite. Slow-growing, rounded and bushy, this neat shrub reaches up to 3m in height. 'Nidiformum' is another cute little one reaching 1.5m in height, but spreading to between 3 and 4m with a hollow 'nest' at its centre.

Complement your evergreen planting with the wonderful winter-flowering Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*). Flowers now are just so welcome. Growing in small clumps, these delightful perennials produce charming white or pink-flushed blooms. The five-petalled saucer shaped flowers are beautiful and contrast well with the green or yellow centres. 'Potter's wheel' with its bowl-shaped flowers is particularly glorious. *Helleborus niger* grows to a height of around 30cm and a spread of about 45cm. 'Alabaster' bears lovely flowers too, creamy white and confident. They are on the big side for a Christmas rose, reaching up to 7 cm across. These plants are often found in a woodland setting so positioning them in a planting combination with *Picea* is ideal.

Foliage and flowers at Christmas and beyond will gladden the heart and bring decorative value to the garden and home. For those of you searching for solutions to 'what shall we buy him/her this year' questions, trees and perennials make interesting, fun gifts for friends and family with a passion for plants. Beyond this, establishing trees like this will improve your local air quality - evergreen spruces having beneficial filtering and cleaning effects all year round.

For further inspiration and advice, visit us at Newington Nurseries on the A329 near Stadhampton.

Newington Nurseries Ltd, Newington, Wallingford, Oxon. OX10 7AW. Tel: 01865 890283.
www.newington-nurseries.co.uk

Out & About	December 2007 / January 2008
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ABINGDON DRAMA CLUB PRESENTS: JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

A pantomime by John Morley, see it at the Unicorn Theatre, Medieval Abbey Buildings, Abingdon.
Evenings: Friday 11th, Saturday 12th, Thursday 17th Friday 18th, Saturday 19th January at 7.30pm
Matinees: Saturday 12th, Sunday 13th, Saturday 19th January at 2.30pm.

Tickets: £6 (children £4) from the Bookstore, Abingdon Precinct or from Ticketline 01235 524538

RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY LECTURES;

Friday 14th December; Entertaining Science by Dr. Ken Farquhar (audiences 8+) at 10.30am (with three workshops) and 7 pm

Jugglers love gravity, unicyclists keeping moving to stay still, intelligent yo-yo's and more! The lecture will give an introduction to forces of gravity, air resistance, friction, equilibrium and gyroscopes.

Friday 11th January 2008: The Horrible Science Show – The Best Bits: By Francis Bate (audience 8+) at 10.30am, 1.30pm and 7.00pm

An interactive science show based on the Horrible Science books. The show will include science demonstrations, readings from the books and quiz questions.

Endpiece

Please will contributors to the Mouthpiece who type their articles for inclusion, type in font Arial 11 which will make it much easier for the editors to cut and paste. Thank you

Please note that any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors.

Contributions for the Mouthpiece to be sent in by 15th January 2008 to:

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