



# Tithe Farm and Ladygrove Residents Association (TFLRA)

## Spring 2018



**WELCOME** – And what a cold winter we’ve had - snow, wind and icy blasts of cold air. The milder weather will be upon us soon, plants growing, birds raising their young and that wonderful sound of Spring - the lawn mower!! We hope you find lots of interesting articles in this newsletter edition ..... in fact we have so much to include we’ve increased it to 6 pages for this edition ..... so, enough reading to keep you going until the next issue in the summer when we’ll also be collecting the annual subs of £1.

**LOCAL SHOPS** - Residents, especially newcomers, may not be aware that there is the much improved Reynolds Way parade of shops in Gainsborough Green, just off the Preston Road. As well as a small supermarket and a newsagents/Post Office, there is a chemist/pharmacy and a very pleasant pizza café, which also does home deliveries.



**BURTON CLOSE/DRAYTON ROAD ALLEYWAY** - Here’s hoping that this can be the last update on the vegetation obstructions along this alleyway. The elder trees along one side have been heavily cut back by the new property management company for the industrial estate. This company, Vine Property Management, tell us that they inspect their area of responsibility on a monthly basis. They also say that their long term aim is to cut back the elders further and eventually remove them. On the other side, we hope that once The Poplars has been sold, the ivy and the deteriorating fence will be dealt with promptly.



**AND ON OUR ESTATES....** - As we move into the season for rapid vegetation growth, may we remind residents to check that their bushes etc don’t start to obstruct the footpaths on our estates?



**WASTE COLLECTIONS** - Unfortunately, quite a lot of non-recycleable rubbish left alongside grey bins was left behind by Biffa on the first grey bin collection day after the Christmas break. Biffa and the Vale confirm that the waste collectors will only take the contents of one grey bin at a time – anything else left alongside the bin will not be picked up. Biffa also confirms that if it is not possible to close the lid of the bin, it can be rejected for emptying. They say that the bin lifter on the lorry can take only a certain weight and there are concerns that an over-full bin could be too heavy.

**EASTER WASTE COLLECTION DATES** - As usual, the waste collections over the Easter period will be a day later. Collections normally due on Friday 30th March will be done on Saturday 31st March (grey bin and food waste). Collection normally due on Friday 6th April will be done on Saturday 7th April (green, garden and food waste bins).





**MRS ANN CAWTHORNE** - We were very sorry to hear of the death in January of Ann Cawthorne from Wordsworth Road. Many of us will have known her both as a neighbour as well as, before her retirement, a long-serving and much respected teacher at Larkmead School. Our sincere condolences to her husband and family.



**BACKDATED COPIES OF TFLRA NEWSLETTERS** - You can now access backdated copies of the TFLRA Newsletters dating back to the first ever newsletter that was issued back in 1971 on our new TFLRA Archives site. Check out what everyone was doing back then! You can find the link either on the TFLRA Blog / Archives tab at <https://tflra.blogspot.co.uk> or go straight to the Archive site at <https://tflra-archives.weebly.com>. These are still being uploaded so there may be a few missing at the moment.



**OTTERS** (by Max the Wildlife Watcher) – This is part of a longer article, with the full one available on the TFLRA Blog at <https://tflra.blogspot.co.uk>

Regularly voted the nations favourite mammal, but how many of us have seen a wild one? As a student I volunteered at an Otter sanctuary in Derbyshire. It was here I got to admire these skilful semi-aquatic predators, who also have a playful side. Their diet is mainly fish and crustaceans, but they are opportunist feeders also eating birds, molluscs and frogs. They build an underground holt into the banks of rivers and are often found near water, but do travel on land normally at night and can travel up to 20 km in a day. This was the late 80s, when many of our rivers were highly polluted.



When I moved to Oxfordshire 13 years ago, I knew this should be perfect otter habitat. I did some otter survey work, first on the Windrush and then at Culham Lock, I looked for footprints on muddy riverbanks (often confused with dog footprints). Look for the distinctive webbing and size, forefoot about 60mm x 65mm in males - juveniles and females have smaller feet.



The more distinctive clue is a deposit of faeces ('spraints' with characteristic musky odour). This is deposited on prominent trees and logs on the riverbanks, to act as a calling card to mark territories. Yes, I have collected otter poo! Unfortunately I never got a positive recording around Culham. However I did hear rumours of sightings, often by people fishing. Fortunately these rumours are now becoming more factual. Our rivers are much cleaner. Otters are no longer persecuted. There have been YouTube videos of otters at Radley lake. When swimming on the surface, they have a distinctive V shaped wake. When swimming under water, you have to follow the line of bubbles to see where they will break the surface. Sadly a dead otter was spotted near Didcot in Autumn, killed on a road, one of the biggest causes of death.



Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre say that otters are definitely on the increase in Oxon, with more sightings on the Thames and Ock. In the past I have had to travel to Skye and Devon to see wild otters, often on a dawn morning walk. It would be a dream come true if I saw a wild otter around Abingdon, maybe you have been one of the lucky ones that this is a reality.





**PILL BOXES AND DRAGONS' TEETH** - Many of us will have walked down the narrow footpath that runs from Nash Drive to Mill Lane and seen the concrete structure known as a Pill Box. Dragons' Teeth tank blocks can be found among the undergrowth near the footpath on the other side of the Ock.



These structures were built in 1940, when it was expected that the German army would soon try to invade Britain. It was decided that lines of defence would be built across Britain, in order to slow the invading army down and to give the more mobile forces time to counter attack.

Pill boxes would have been staffed by men who came to be known as the Home Guard – or Dad's Army as we think of it now. Some 18,000 were built between May and September 1940, of which about 6,000 are still standing. Our pill box was on the 'red' defence line which linked with other parts of the lines criss-crossing the south of England and London. It originally had a twin, round about where Byron Close is now. In the end, the threat of invasion faded and the pill boxes were never used. Very good photos and more information can be seen on the Abingdon blog for 18th February 2009 and on 6th February this year.



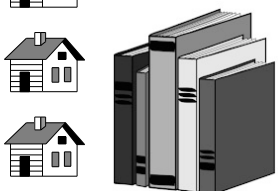
**ALBERT PARK SINGERS** - are a friendly mixed choir whose members meet in St Michael's Church Hall in Park Road, Abingdon on Mondays 6.30pm – 8pm. They sing popular and traditional songs, light classical and musical numbers. No audition is required. To find out about joining, email: [lesley.bosley@gmail.com](mailto:lesley.bosley@gmail.com) or [annasilvester@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:annasilvester@hotmail.co.uk)

**OUR 'OLDEST' RESIDENTS** - In our Christmas newsletter, we asked if anyone could remember the estates when they were first built. We've had these very interesting memories from residents of Wordsworth Road. 'My wife and I purchased the first house on Tith Farm in August 1968. All that existed was the bases for the show houses, which were built on what is now Mill Road. The original houses were installed with gas warm air heating units, so had no chimneys. Later "cheap" oil took over. The oil tank was built on the playing field. Today the only sign of this is the short path leading to where the base of the tank was situated. As the days of this "cheap" oil began to run out, the builders reverted back to gas. The builders office, yard etc, was in the old farm house situated on Drayton Road, which is where Lady Eleanor Court is today. The house prices originally, 50 years ago were as follows, £4,250 for a semi, £5,250 for a detached dwelling joined by the garage and £6,250 for the 4 bedroom detached. How times have changed!'



Carol and Pete

There will be more memories from other residents in the next Newsletter!!!



**CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION** – This was won by Ava from Masefield Crescent who won the under 6's category, and Ellie from Ladygrove won the 6 and over category - both girls won a book token. Well done!!! Thank you to all who took part - our independent judge said she found it very difficult to choose from all the wonderful pictures.





**NORTH FACING GARDEN** (*Martin Gulliver writes*) - I'm guessing half the houses on this estate have north facing gardens, and many more a north facing bed, that gets little sunlight, especially in the winter months. My garden is north facing, so here are a few ideas for plants that will thrive. **Ferns** – these will stay green all year round and the new shoots unfurling in spring are gorgeous. Cut back the large Dryopteris ferns after Christmas. **Shrubs** – Mahonia, Cotoneaster, Hebes, Hydrangea, Skimmia, Viburnum and most evergreen shrubs do well against a wall or fence, Ivy does very well and is loved by birds and insects. Climbing Hydrangea, Japanese Quince and Escallonia also like the shade. **Bulbs** – most bulbs are fine in shade, but Snowdrops especially like it, as do winter aconites and snakes head fritillaries. **Perennials** – Astrantia, Dicentra (Bleeding Heart), Brunnera, hardy Geraniums and Primroses all do well. Hellebores love the shade and soon spread, as do Lily of the Valley. Bergenia do well in shade, and the leaves make good ground cover. **Containers** – small Ferns, Ivy, Heuchera all do well in containers and stay evergreen throughout winter. Azaleas and Dwarf Rhododendrons are good in containers – use ericaceous compost. In any shade area, the secret is to brighten up any darkness. Hence with ivies, use a light or golf hearted one. Check the labels on plants in garden centres as many will tolerate light shade, and indeed many centres or nurseries will have a shade-loving plant area.



**SHORT LOCAL WALKS!** - A short town walk from our estates (1 hour). Timing is for fast walkers with no stops. The walk is on pavements which can be uneven. Please take care when crossing the roads. This walk is a historical walk, passing many of Abingdon's most interesting houses and buildings. Why not stop halfway in the Market Place for a coffee break or visit the museum (check opening times first)?

- (1)** Cross the Drayton Road at the pedestrian crossing and walk north to the double roundabout.
- (2)** Cross the main road at the pedestrian crossing and walk northwards along Spring Road (to the left were the old MG Motorworks and also the cemetery further up is worth a visit).
- (3)** Take either Edward Street or Exborne Road on the right, leading to Victoria Road.
- (4)** Follow Victoria Road, across Park Road and along Park Crescent around the boundary of Albert Park. Alternatively, walk along the paths inside the park hedge. The monument to Prince Albert is at the head of the park.
- (5)** At the crossroads with Park Road at the park east side, go left along Park Road, keeping the buildings of Abingdon School on your left.
- (6)** Cross Stratton Way at the pedestrian crossing and make your way through the shopping centre to the Market Place (forking left at the back of Poundland then right down the precinct past Boots).
- (7)** On the other side of the Town Hall, follow East St. Helens Street down to St Helens Church and the Almshouses.
- (8)** Walk along the river, past the Old Anchor Inn, over the little bridge and straight on into Caldecott Road.
- (9)** Follow Caldecott Road to its end, then cross the Drayton Road back to our estates.

A further walk will be described in the next newsletter. All walkers are invited to suggest a favourite local walk in the town or countryside which we'll include in future newsletters.

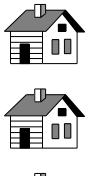
**PLANT SWAP** – For all gardeners!! There will be another Plant Swap this year on Saturday 12th May on the driveway at 39 Masefield Crescent between 3.00pm and 5.00pm, come rain or shine. Bring along your extra plants, surplus seedlings or spare cuttings and be ready to 'swap' - all for free!! Please do check the Blog beforehand in case the date changes at the last minute.







**HEALTHY ABINGDON** (*Councillor Monica Lovatt writes*) - The purpose of Healthy Abingdon is to bring community groups and individuals together with the NHS and local government to understand and learn from each other and to find new ways to work on health and wellbeing issues. We are a charity and the first one of its type in Oxfordshire and were set up in early 2017.



There are over 200 community groups in Abingdon covering sports, horticulture, music, arts, singing, history and much more. All these have some health-giving benefit if only to get people out of the house and interacting with others. We have had two public meetings so far. The first had the theme of working with local government and the second working with the NHS in the community setting. They are informal with questions asked, answers given, and discussion encouraged.



We pick up ideas, for instance for older people to get about Abingdon more benches are required at bus stops and to just have a rest if mobility is poor. Someone in the audience wants to provide benches in the town in memory of her husband. We are now working to help this lady in her quest. Another was older people and having contact with children when families are split and maybe do not have contact with grandparents. We have discovered Full Circle that operates in Oxfordshire in primary schools and does not have a project in this part of the county. Another project that we are pursuing is to become a dementia friendly town. Watch this space!



If you want to know more, please contact me on: [monicalovatt@msn.com](mailto:monicalovatt@msn.com) Tel. 01235 530 538. Website: [www.healthyabingdon.org.uk](http://www.healthyabingdon.org.uk)



**TREES ON WORDSWORTH/LONGFELLOW GREEN** - The Town Council have told us that they still intend planting new trees on the green, hopefully by the end of March. At the time they updated us, the green was still solid with frost and snow, so they will have to wait until the ground has warmed up again.



**ROGUE TRADERS** - Neighbourhood Watch has sent us the following information from the Thames Valley Police Alert system, warning us about rogue traders in the area.



They say they have received a number of calls about Rogue Traders offering to work on your driveway because they are working in the Abingdon area. Put simply, where a service costs over £35, customers have a 7 day cooling off



period and must be provided with a written notice of these rights prior to work being started. Good tradesmen are generally booked up and will not make door to door sales. Reports have included children being used to hand out promotional information as well as pushy tactics on the doorstep.



Please look out for your vulnerable neighbours by reporting suspicious behaviour.



Trading standards can be called on 03454 04 05 06 for advice. If suspicious people are in the area at the time the Police would also welcome calls on 101.





**SPRING QUIZ 2018 - LOST RIVERS** - In this passage you will find twenty hidden British rivers. You might even find more, as rivers tend to have short, snappy names!



Jack looked despairingly over the large, neglected stretch of land that was the garden. The house, with a small, unexpected legacy from his uncle, had been made habitable, but the garden that came with it, a great, weedy expanse, made him want to abandon it. The task seemed way too hard, made even harder by the piles of rocks here and there. He counted at least twenty new molehills since last time. Something darted across the end of the garden, a mouse fleeing from a cat, perhaps, or from a crow eyeing it from a nearby branch. He thought he might rent it out rather than stay there. He was a teacher, well able to use the money, but prospective tenants took one look at the garden and, no wonder, went away. He couldn't quite estimate the amount of time he would need. He found the prospect awesome. Well, gardening was good exercise, so he picked up his spade and set to work. Closing date 29<sup>th</sup> April - drop entries into 18 Mill Road or email them to [tfl\\_ra@zoho.com](mailto:tfl_ra@zoho.com) There will be a small prize for the winner!!



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**ADVERTS** - You can also advertise your business. A full advert can go on the blog with a short summary in the paper newsletters. £10.00 for residents for the year. We look forward to hearing from you!



- **Window Wise** – Supply and fit double glazed windows, doors and conservatories – Repairs undertaken on all double glazing – No pressurised sales – Friendly service. Ring Martin for a free quotation on 07885571778 or 01235-559334.
- **Milk and More** - delivered to your door! To arrange home deliveries of milk and other goods, contact Steve Enock Dairies Ltd of Milk and More. Deliveries on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Tel 0345 606 3606 email [stevenock@hotmail.com](mailto:stevenock@hotmail.com).
- **Simon's News** - Newspaper home delivery, 7 days a week - telephone 01235-553001.



**NEXT MEETING AND CONTACT** - Please see Blog at <https://tflra.blogspot.co.uk> for the next meeting. For contributions, articles, announcements or if you'd like to come along to a meeting email at [tfl\\_ra@zoho.com](mailto:tfl_ra@zoho.com) or phone / text on our new number **07548419545** to leave a message.



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