

THE FARM & LADYGROVE NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2007

Welcome to the September newsletter. A large part of this issue will be devoted to the aftermath of the flood. As promised, there is a "Flood Heroes" and a "Flood Thumbs Down" section, as well as a really graphic account from a resident of the experience of being flooded, which also shows how neighbours helped each other and the community really pulled together.

Many Thanks also for all the offers of goods and help that were received as a result of the "Flood Special" issue.

Post Flood stories - If you have a story to tell about how you are coping in the weeks and months after the flood, we would be happy to publish it in the October newsletter. **Don't let** this part of Abingdon be ignored or forgotten.

We have been asked by residents if a link road at the top of the estate to the traffic lights at Preston Road could be made. Maybe Councilor Badcock could look into this and let the newsletter know.

Following the flood it would be useful if we could have some people to help in any future emergency. We had a lot of offers after the flood. If these people would like to contact us again, we could set up an emergency help team. They would be mobilised through the emergency planning officer.

FOR SALE

**Trailer £150, cover - £10, Fridge - £10,
Table - £10, Lamp - £5
Call Martine on 0778 917 2549**

**NEED SOMEONE TO TAKE AWAY THOSE DREADED JOBS
OF IRONING AND CLEANING?
THEN I'M YOUR WOMAN!
INTERESTED? Call Martine on 0778 917 2549**

MISSING CAT

**Has anyone seen our cat Ozzie?
He was last seen outside 8 Coleridge Drive on August 2nd.
He has light brown stripes and white feet.
If you have seen him or know what happened to him,
Please contact 01235 203 130**

Jephson Letter (published in the June edition)

We have received a response to the letter published in the July newsletter, from the daughter of one of the Jephson residents. The text is printed verbatim:

“The July response to the above mentioned letter was a disappointment.

As the Jephson letter had been very clear, saying the children had again committed criminal damage to private property & continue to be a public nuisance. Reminding the children’s parents, or guardians, in the hope they would deal with it in a responsible manner.

For years the children have been continually, “asked in a POLITE manner to play elsewhere” Some children do stop & apologize, although on the other hand there are parents whose reaction to these requests has been to say “P—s off& worse.

Yes, both parents & children know Jephson flats are private property and not to be played around or near, but to date, this still goes ignored.

“Parents like their children to be near home”, preferring them to play in the busy road or under someone else’s window. “The green” mentioned is rarely used as “a wonderful play area”, neither, it seems, are their own gardens.

The problems are “so easily addressed” = **BE responsible** & teach your children to be responsible and caring. Insist they do not play by, or around the flats at any time.

The elderly residents deserve, in fact have a right, to peace & quiet in their own homes. Many of these residents still help to better their local community. Some are over 90, in years, & could be us one day, maybe, like our Parents and Grandparents now.

Is, disrespect, harassment, worry & noise, really, the only rewards afforded them?

I have not enjoyed using space, in the Tithe Farm & Ladygrove newsletter like this. Like most of us, I prefer it to be amusing and informative. Perhaps the TF & L selection for print process, should consider not publishing anonymous material in future?” **June Wright**

(Mrs Wright has agreed to give her e-mail address to anyone who would like her to clarify any points made. Contact the editors if you wish to comment.)

The Garden in September

It probably does not need me to tell you now that a garden will often make a miraculous recovery from a flood – by now you will probably know which plants have survived and which haven’t. A good tip if unsure is to scrape away a bit of the bark at the base of the stem. If it is white or green underneath, it should be alive - if it is brown, it’s probably had it.

If in doubt renew the plant, perhaps with a bit of instant late-flowering colour to tide you over until more permanent plantings can be made. Although a lot of goodness will have been leached from the soil by the flood, it is not a good idea to feed the soil at this late stage as it will encourage sappy growth which may suffer as the temperatures start to drop.

For you lucky people who escaped, now is the time to plant spring-flowering bulbs except tulips which can wait until November. Hardy annuals can also be sown to provide early colour for next year. Now is also a good time to plant new shrubs and perennials whilst the soil is still reasonably warm and wallflowers and sweet williams can also be planted out now for the spring. Start to clear up the garden as plants go over, and dig over any heavy soil so it can break up over the winter

Thoughts on the flooding...

- 1) Wasn’t it nice to get a warning from the Environment Agency some two hours after the water started pouring through the garden.
- 2) I spoke to neighbours I had never even said hello to before as we all helped each other out.
- 3) We missed an opportunity to make some money – charging the tourists who came round on Sunday afternoon with their cameras and videophones.
- 4) Communication from the council was very poor – the promised “fleet of lorries to clear up the carpets etc” never materialised and we then found we had to phone for a lorry. I saw several instances of empty trucks coming into Orpwood Way, looking around and then driving off still empty.
- 5) Wasn’t it insensitive of Andrews Estate Agents to do a leaflet delivery some two days after the floods had receded - as if our houses are now saleable...
- 6) The last time the garden flooded in January 2003, we had helicopters, the police and fire brigade round the night it happened. This time – nothing until we phoned the police ourselves.

Martin Gulliver

10 K MULTI-TERRAIN RUN
in aid of **SAVE RADLEY LAKES**
Sunday 23rd September starting 10.30 a.m.
from Tilsey Park.
Cost of entry: £6 in advance, £7 on the day
For more information, see www.saveradleylakes.org.uk

FESTIVAL OF MASSED MALE VOICES
OXFORD WELSH MALE VOICE CHOIR
present the magnificent sound of 120 voices...
Joining them on stage - Guest choirs from:
Abercynon - Carmarthen - Newport
Guest Soloist: Rhian Williams Mezzo Soprano

OXFORD TOWN HALL
St Aldates Oxford Saturday Sept 29th 07
7.30pm – doors open 6.45pm
Tickets: £15 [£13 concession] – available from:
Music Shop St Aldates Oxford
Blackwells Broad St Oxford
Dawsons High St Abingdon
Ron Salter [OWMVChoir] 01869 331245
Benefiting - SOBELL HOUSE HOSPICE Oxford

OXFORD WELSH MALE VOICE CHOIR

Do You Enjoy Singing?

Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir is seeking to boost its numbers to respond to increased bookings. If you like music, and particularly if you enjoy singing, we would be delighted to hear from you.

You do NOT have to be Welsh or be able to speak Welsh, to be able to read music, to have a wonderful voice.

YOU JUST NEED TO WANT to enjoy singing, to be part of a team, to have fun.
You bring yourself and your voice and we'll do the rest.

We practise every Thursday evening from 7.30 - 9.30pm at Cowley Community Centre, Oxford. If you would like to know more why not come to a practice night. With no obligation, you can have a taste of what it feels like to be part of the choir.
For more information contact our Secretary on: 01865 552629,
07859 316611, e:mail: colin.edwards@talktalk.net

“QUAKERS TODAY” – AN EXHIBITION

Discover the Quaker Way – simple, contemporary, radical
At St. Ethelwold's House, 30 East St. Helen Street, from 23 to 29 September, inclusive.
Times: Monday to Saturday 10 – 4; Sunday 23rd 12 – 4.

Have you ever wondered what Quakers are like? Some think we live on only in history, or on the backs of porridge packs wearing rather strange clothes. Others believe we are impossibly strict or even impossibly good. In reality we are much like the rest of the world, a mixture. Because we have no set dogmas or creeds we have always found it easy to tolerate a wide range of views. Most of us think there is more to religion than just setting aside an hour on Sunday and we get involved with all sorts of activities and movements. If you are curious to know more, come along for information, conversation and refreshment. We will not ask you to make any commitments.

For more information contact www.abingdonquakers.org.uk or ring 01235 520447

A Medlicott Resident's Account of the Flood

During the early hours of Sunday 22nd July, we were awoken by a policeman knocking on the front doors. (I count ourselves as lucky, as our good neighbour from across the road decided to knock before the constabulary did, as that would really have frightened us, to be faced with a policeman at that time of the morning). It was to say that we needed to get up, get dressed and put our valuables upstairs, as we were about to be flooded. Our immediate reaction was, "Where is Jeremy Beadle? What is the date? Is it April 1st?" In the past 17 years that we have lived on Medlicott Drive, we have not even had a puddle collect in our street, even when we've had such downpours of rain like had happened the previous Friday. We have driven through water on Francis Little Drive before, which has occasionally happened from both sides of the road, but never in our street. However, all of my neighbours were taking the warning seriously, so we thought we should as well. The first things to be moved were the cars so we took one to a friend's house on Gainsborough Green. She was asleep. It was the middle of the night and we were not brave enough to wake her, so we parked it on her drive, posted the keys through her letterbox and left it there. Little did I realise that it would be another 3 days before we could safely retrieve it. Our second car we took to another friend's house on Mill Road, who had just returned from work, so was still awake. We asked her if we could possibly use the spare space on her driveway. She readily agreed and said that it could stay there as long as was needed, and we could also go back there to spend the night if we needed to. When we arrived back home the water was progressing up the street. It looked as if it was really happening. We could hardly believe that we were awake and that this wasn't some awful nightmare. We began to move our possessions upstairs. We put the telly on the sofa and thought, "Now where do we put the sofa?" We were not prepared at all and our brains were not functioning like they should when faced with a task that we had never needed to do before. We rolled up rugs, we put the children's trainers in their bedrooms. With the help of neighbours, the freezer was moved up on to some breeze blocks. We still could not believe it was happening, until just a few hours later it ran through the walls, under the doors and basically through the whole ground floor of our home and spilled out into the back garden. Looking back now, we can only liken it to a burglar. This came into our home in the middle of the night, uninvited and did as much damage as it possibly could have done. The following day was spent upstairs; obviously the ground floor was uninhabitable. My children left with their wellies on to go to their Nanny's. At least she was dry and she was cooking a Sunday roast (I knew there had to be another reason!!!) When we got up on Monday morning, we could clearly see that the drains at one end of the road were not taking any more water, but the drains at the other end were, and indeed, the level of the flood was dramatically falling, but only at one end of the street. It took 5 of us to work out a plan. We needed to sweep the water from one end of the street to the other, in order for the water that was left to escape through the drains that were still able to cope with it. It was approximately 7.30 a.m. when Marian and David Brown, Brendan Conway and myself and my husband began, armed with a broom each. This is really why I decided to write to the newsletter, because after very little time, Marian had knocked on one other door to see if they might be able to help, and so had I. Both these neighbours came out, armed with brooms and began to sweep with us. We all stood in a row on one side of the street and got a rhythm going. It was working, slowly, but it was working. After doing this for only a few more minutes, we began to realize that more people were arriving, none of whom had been asked, all armed with brooms. Some came from neighbouring streets and had not even been flooded. People that morning came to help us, who had phoned in to their work to say they would not be coming in, but were staying at home to help anybody that needed their help. How humble is that? Brendan called in a favour and a mate appeared with a pump, which really helped move things along. When we turned around to do a quick head count, we realized that both sides of the road were now being swept simultaneously, the flood was disappearing fast, and there were 31 people now trying to remove it. From the original 5 that first turned out, wasn't that just GREAT!!! From then on, the cameras arrived from Central T.V. as did a reporter on a motorbike, and dutifully recorded us sweeping and taking interviews. We had been warned that the waters could return that night and they might be higher than they were before. Our aim was to get rid of the water already there, then, if we were unlucky enough to receive a second helping, it could flood the road first before having to come back indoors again. We could quickly see that we were achieving our goal with all of the manpower that we had, so, as there were enough willing hands, it was decided that some of the stronger helpers between us would sweep out neighbours' garages and driveways. This, of course, created more water in the street, which the rest of us continued to help on the way down the road to the accommodating drains. By 1.30 p.m. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! We had achieved our goal. Our road was floodless. Everybody was so grateful to everybody else for pulling together willingly and helping each other out. So how can we thank our helpers enough? I do hope that we never have to repay the favour, but if it happens, then we definitely will. A very big thank you must also be said to Tracey Kennedy's mum and Rachel from No. 3, who supplied endless amounts of teas and coffees all through the morning, and jammy dodgers, which were most welcome. After all of this was done, we all then received numerous amounts of offers from "dry" houses, to do our washing for us, do some tumble drying and to cook our teas; the kindness is endless. What a lovely estate we live on, which is full of kind, caring, thoughtful and selfless people.

A heartfelt Thank You to everybody.

David and Marina Hibbard

July Quiz answers and September Quiz – The “Undiscovered Territories” hidden in the story were as follows: Tonga, Togo, Nepal, Cuba, Iran, U.S.A., Chad, Monaco, Germany, Malta, Bhutan, Norway, Congo, Lebanon, Denmark, Spain, Peru, China, Greece, Canada, Bahrain. I mentioned that there were 21 countries hidden, but apologies for only putting 20 spaces.

September Quiz – Q for quick quiz questions – Answers (all beginning with Q) to Eleanor, 23 Masfield by 19th September

- 1) Advertised in this month’s newsletter _____
- 2) Isolation of the infected _____
- 3) Small short tailed bird _____
- 4) Huntsman eats substitute meat! _____
- 5) Hunchback of Notre Dame _____
- 6) Two pints _____
- 7) Unsteady notes are a crispy snack _____
- 8) Royal Rock Band _____
- 9) Bland white cheese made of elementary particles? _____
- 10) Sunday before Ash Wednesday _____
- 11) Norwegian traitor _____
- 12) Old fashioned malaria cure _____
- 13) Small, hard, yellow fruit _____
- 14) Shaky arrow holder _____
- 15) He tilted at windmills _____
- 16) You may get bogged down here! _____
- 17) Ring-throwing game _____
- 18) Harry Potter’s sport _____
- 19) Crystalline silicon dioxide _____
- 20) The rules of boxing _____

FLOOD HEROES

Helga Brown thanks **Dorothy and Jim Robins** for waking her up on the night of the flood.

Chris and Karen Godfrey of Chaunterell Way would like to thank **Mark Hutton** for warning them and **Damien Brant** of Caldecott Road for all the help he gave in the days following the flood.

Sandra and Ian Belcher would like to thank the people who swept out the flood waters from the road and their drive. They were unable to help due to health problems.

To **Paul, Julian and Bob** for the assistance rendered. Thanks guys! **Brian**

Bob and Elizabeth Harland want to say a big “thank you” to all the kind people in Orpwood Way who worked so hard to save their possessions from the flood during the horror of Saturday night. “We were away at the time and some of these wonderful people had already been flooded but still worked hard for us. How can we ever thank you enough?”

Of course, there were many more flood heroes and many people who expressed their thanks to their friends and neighbours personally, but I hope this section gives some idea of the way people looked out for each other and worked together in a crisis.

Councillors' Surgeries

Mike and Marilyn Badcock 1st Saturday of the month in the Family Room,
Abingdon Conservative Club, Ock Street.

**Date of the next TFLRA Committee Meeting –
Wednesday 12th September 8p.m. in the Jephson Common Room.
Deadline for items for the next newsletter – Wednesday 19th September 2007**

Contact us – items for publication:

Eleanor Dangerfield 01235 531 857 23 Masefield Crescent Abingdon
eledanger@hotmail.com
Grenville Wells tithefarm2@yahoo.co.uk

Death announcement

Sheelagh Rogers contacted the newsletter to say that **Peter Rogers** died on 3rd June. He had been ill for a number of years, but the end was quite sudden. He knew a number of people on the estate, but Sheelagh has not been able to contact them all

This email was sent to Dr Evan Harris MP by a resident of Coleridge Drive

To Rt Hon Evan Harris,MP

Dear Mr Harris

Having had my house flooded to a depth of 6" and my garage to 12"(which contained the majority of my "White Goods"),I am now reflecting on what might have been done in order to minimise the effects and also the shock of being flooded with absolutely no warning.On Saturday 21st of July the Residents of Ladygrove Estate were given individual verbal warnings,my house is approximately 250 yards from Ladygrove Estate houses and as outlined above we had no flood warning or issued with any sand bags

On Sunday 22nd July I arose at about 7.00am and noticed a quantity of water at the end of the cul de sac where I live,I assumed that we had had had subsantial rainfall during the night,this water continued to rise until we realised that it was coming from the Ladygrove Estate and the Ock River,still no warnings of any kind.The waters continued to rise,we rescued what possesions we could,there being 2 of us in the house in our 60's and not much chance of getting any help from desperate neighbours,the rest is now history.

With regard to flood alerts,of which I understand there were 3 in total,we only had warning of the 2nd alert,what happened to nos 1 and 3 I wonder.Having discussed events with my neighbours there is a consensus of opinion that the Environment Agency had plenty of info on the impending disaster,again it is local info and opinion that this water could have been controlled better,after all the Thames was not in full flood and the Ock River is only a tributary.I think you Mr Harris are "better placed" to extract the truth of what happened over this fatefull weekend than myself, I look forward to your public meeting in the near future.

Yours Sincerely
Chris Blomfield