



A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Newsletter – Let's hope that the weather at least stays dry. We've had quite enough rain over the past eight months and the late November flooding was very disconcerting for a large number of TFL residents.

The meeting in the Guildhall on Saturday 24th November about the proposed 160 house development behind Virginia Way was very well attended and some very good points were made. Of course, the main concern for people on Tithe Farm Ladygrove was the potential increase in traffic on the Drayton Road but we could all sympathise with the residents in the lower lying areas east of Drayton Road and their concern that water displacement by the new housing would increase the flood risk.

We will put in an objection on behalf of Tithe Farm Ladygrove but hopefully residents will put in individual objections, because it's the number of objections that count.

Flood Forum – date for your diary. – The annual Flood Forum will take place on Thursday 28th February at 8p.m. at Preston Road Community Centre. Our M.P. Nicola Blackwood, Cllr Ian Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire county Council, and representatives from the Environment Agency will be there. All residents are welcome. The Ock Valley Flood Group have been doing a great job working along the river, clearing debris and improving the river flow and they will be distributing reminders of the Flood Forum nearer the time.

New Bridge over the Ock at the end of Mill Lane – The bridge is finished at last and looks very nice. This means, in theory, that you can do the circular walk along the path to Tesco and back via the new bridge and down Mill Lane. At the time of writing, however, you can just stand on the bridge and survey the flooded fields.

Hedges taking over footpaths – There have been complaints that some residents are letting hedges and bushes encroach on the footpath in front of their house, in some cases making it almost impossible for people with buggies or mobility vehicles to get past. So if you think your shrubbery might be guilty of this, please get busy with your shears.

Slow down! – Some people are still driving too fast on the estate. Even though 30 m.p.h. is legal, 20 m.p.h. is much safer. And when you get to the Drayton Road you can't usually go very fast anyway.



Christmas and New Year Waste Collections

Normal Collection Day

Fri 28th Dec (black)

Fri 4th Jan (green)

Fri 11th Jan (black)

Will be collected on:

Mon 31st Dec

Mon 7th Jan

Sat 12th Jan*



*Saturday collections start an hour earlier, so put your bins out the night before.

Grass cutting – not very seasonal but Spring will come again. The TFLRA committee finally got a response from the Town Council about their grass cutting policy. Many people had complained last Summer about the cut grass being left behind when the mowers had finished.

This was the Council's response: Because of the wet weather, the grass grew more quickly, so the cut grass left behind was longer. Normally it is not noticeable. There are no plans at present to use catching baskets as this would add to the cost but if there is a run of wet Summers we may rethink our policy. They also agreed that the cut area around the adult gym equipment was too small and will be extended next year.

Guy Barlow of Longfellow Drive is very annoyed about the standard of grass cutting and the state of the footpaths, verges and gutters. He lives opposite the green and says he has seen a decline in the number of cuts and the standard of cutting. He does not feel he is getting value for money for his Council Tax and has written not only to the Council but to the M.P. as well. He urges residents who are unhappy with the lack of maintenance to e-mail or write to the Council.

Proposed Local Government Ward Boundary Changes – At present we are in Ock Meadow ward, which comprises the area West of Drayton Road and South of Marcham Road plus East of Drayton Road as far as the river and South of Ock Street (with a few little bits North of Ock Street). To the South of Saxton Road it is Caldecott ward.

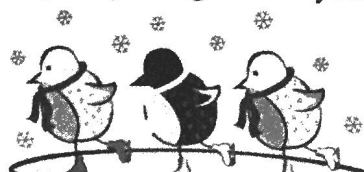
If the new proposals are accepted, Ock Meadow ward will disappear and the area Tithe Farm Ladygrove will join up with the area North of Marcham Road and Ock Street, including the Albert Park area and North Abingdon West of Wootton Road. It will be called Fitzharris Ward. The area around Caldecott Road will become part of Caldecott ward.

If you think this sounds complicated, you are right. It is. The best thing to do is to go to the website <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>. You then type in your postcode and this takes you to the map of the proposed new ward. You can also follow a link to give your comments, objections and recommendations. The consultation is open until **7th January**. If you don't have the internet, you can see the proposals at the Vale offices.

MARATHON MAN!

P.C. Mark Miller of Longfellow Drive will be running in the 2013 London Marathon in April to raise money for a) homeless people in Oxford and b) Cancer Research U.K. He is hoping to raise £2000. You can sponsor Mark on www.justgiving.com/Mark-Miller8. He will also be selling raffle tickets door to door in the area around Longfellow Drive in the coming weeks. Prizes include meals out for two in Oxford restaurants, Oxford sightseeing tours by bus or boat, alcohol, a Toni and Guy voucher worth £40, Oxford United tickets and London Welsh Rugby tickets, B&B in an Oxford hotel, Designer fragrances, Comedy Club tickets, chocolates, plus many more.

This sounds terrific so come on everybody and give him your support!



RESPONDING TO GUATEMALA'S WORST EARTHQUAKE IN 36 YEARS

On Wednesday 7th November 2012 a magnitude 7.4 earthquake hit off the coast of Guatemala, killing an estimated 52 people. The worst affected towns were in the departments of San Marcos and Quetzaltenango (Xela). Xela had been my hometown for the past 2 months whilst I had been studying Spanish.

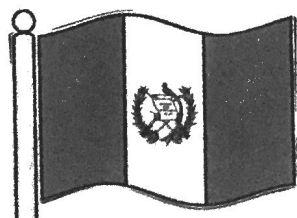
I did not feel the quake as I was travelling in a mini-bus along a bumpy road in the north of Guatemala. The first I became aware of it was emails from people at home asking if I was OK. Two days after the quake, instead of continuing our journey into Mexico, my friend (Vicky) and I returned to Xela on a 16hr overnight bus. Having both studied Disaster Management and volunteered in Haiti in 2011, Vicky and I wanted to see if we could be of any help on the ground. The day after returning to Xela we hopped on a 'chicken bus' (the public transport in Guatemala where you can literally carry anything) to visit San Marcos to see the devastation for ourselves.

Through European Disaster Volunteers, the organisation that I had volunteered with in Haiti, we have set up a relief fund for the earthquake survivors. We have raised approximately £1300 from friends and family donating from all around the world. The support has been fantastic. The money has been used to provide people with basic necessities- food, water, blankets and nappies.

With the help of local organisations, so far we have done four donation runs to four different locations across the worst affected regions. This week we teamed up with an organisation known as "Mujeres Trabajan Unidas" which translates to "Women Work Together" to provide aid to families they work with who had not yet received any. With the help of the three Guatemalan ladies that worked for the organisation, we bought rice, maize, beans, oats, powdered milk and sugar in bulk and divided it into individual bags for the families. The following morning we loaded up two pick up trucks, jumped in the back and took the aid to remote villages in the beautiful countryside. The village I went to was severely affected by the earthquake and house after house had "DEMOLICION TOTAL" spray painted on it. One lady I met was living in her father's home after her house was completely destroyed. Luckily they were all outside when the earthquake struck. For the first two nights she slept in a cornfield with her family as they were too frightened to sleep under a roof. Her father's house is also damaged so they have built a small shack on his land made from planks of wood, inside three double beds are joined together for nine people to sleep. She told me that it is very cold at night. Temperatures are dropping to below freezing. We provided her with food, water, blankets and clothing. Hopefully it will provide some relief to her family.

So far we have helped about 80 families by providing basic necessities. We hope all these families we have met and many more around Guatemala can recover from the worst earthquake to strike Guatemala in 36 years.

I have kept a blog of my time here in Guatemala which you can find at <http://itchyfeetontheloose.wordpress.com>. After leaving Guatemala I will be continuing my journey through Central America and return to Abingdon in May 2013.



The Garden in January – Happy New Year!

Assuming December has been reasonably kind, after the Christmas excitement has died down, now is the time to check all plants and prune off any branches damaged by wind/snow/flood to avoid disease getting in. Also clear up all dead and battered foliage.

Now is also the time to prune ivy – just clip it to shape with shears.

Assuming the weather allows, now is an ideal time of year to repair structures such as sheds, greenhouses, cold frames and fences, whilst the foliage is not in the way. This also of course applies especially supports for climbers.

Move strawberries into the greenhouse now to get fruit in May.

Continue with hardwood cuttings – cut a piece of stem about 4 inches long and insert it in a trench in a quiet part of the garden, preferably with sand at the bottom to help drainage. Ensure you plant them the same way up as they were on the plant! They should root by the autumn.

Chit seed potatoes now by placing them in a cool, light frost free place – a spare room is ideal – so they sprout ready for planting late in February or March.

Sow in the greenhouse:-

Sweet peas

Rocket

Radish

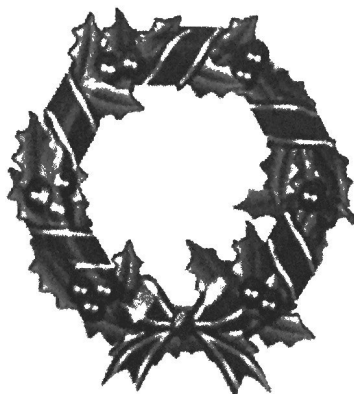
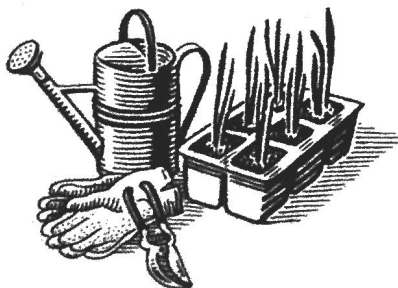
As usual keep an eye out for weeds and dig over spare soil. Keep an eye also on tall shrubs and if the wind has loosened the soil around the stem, firm it back in.

Later in February is a good time to feed all borders. Use well rotted compost if you can get it, otherwise a handful of general fertiliser scattered per square yard will be fine. The idea is to get things moving after winter. Also top dress containers. This purely involves scraping away the top inch or so of compost and replacing with fresh.

Trim winter flowering heathers as they finish and this will ensure they keep their shape and provide good flowers next winter. Also cut back old hellebore leaves to let light get to the new growth that should now be showing

Prune fuchsia and buddleia hard back to encourage new growth. Buddleia can often get leggy and thus only flowers at the top of the bush so cut it back now to a few inches from the base and it will soon throw up new flowering branches.

As snowdrops fade, lift and divide them to spread them round the garden. Now is also an ideal time to buy them “in the green” - that is as dormant leaves, and the newspapers will often have adverts. They are much cheaper this way and much more reliable than bulbs which rarely do well.



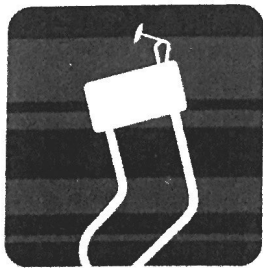
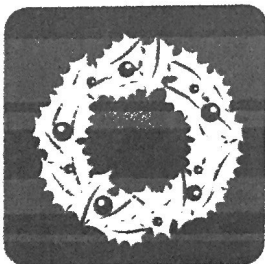
Martin Gulliver

CRYPTIC CHRISTMAS QUIZ



The solutions to these cryptic clues are all words, both sacred and secular, connected to the Christmas season. Answers to Eleanor, 23 Masefield, by 26th January.

1. John Noakes's dog leads a bunch of cows. _____
2. I'm untidily scared without e _____
3. Santa's killer sledge _____
4. The Queen follows this crevice _____
5. 1920's art style before supplies are limited _____
6. Just alter the last 2 for an acute or obtuse one _____
7. Cowardly name for Christmas _____
8. Above average last testament _____
9. Pugilistic 24 hours _____
10. Steal upon entry _____
11. Escapologist's ideal links _____
12. Thin fog goes before French foot digit _____
13. Out of breath.... Oh! Can't speak _____
14. Put on an opening instrument _____
15. Copy another's answer _____
16. Sounds as if the Fe railway has talons _____
17. Gift is here _____
18. Liz's French turn up _____
19. Not out! _____
20. Seasonal musical girl _____



Autumn Quiz – On your metal – Answers – 1)Iron Lady 2)David Steel 3)Lead Balloon 4)brass tacks 5)nickel 6)copper 7)Tommy Steele 8)Benin Bronzes 9)Iron Duke 10)Tin Man 11)small copper 12)bronze 13)Fool's gold 14)Tin Lizzie 15)Man in the Iron Mask 16)Copper Plate 17)Long John Silver 18)Goldfinch 19)Swing the lead 20)Iron Cross

Councillors' Surgeries - at the TFLRA Committee Meeting
Your local Councillors have been invited to the Committee meetings.

Contact details:

Samantha Bowring(Town) samantha.bowring@abingdon.gov.uk 07767 072 095

Mike Badcock- michael.badcock@abingdon.gov.uk 01235 201 810

Marilyn Badcock – marilyn.badcock@abingdon.gov.uk 01235 201 810

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

Dates of the TFLRA meetings: usually 2nd Wednesday of each month
8p.m. in the Jephson Common Room – all residents welcome – check beforehand in
case of change of date.

Next meetings Wed 9th January, Wed 13th February 2013

Contact the newsletter – items for publication: Eleanor Dangerfield 01235 531857
23 Masefield - eledanger@hotmail.com. Deadline for next newsletter – 26th January 2013

TOWN EVENTS

Saturday 22nd December - Last minute shopping and gift wrapping service - 10 a.m. - 3p.m. - Market Place

Friday 25th January 2013 – Mayor's Charity Burns Night Quiz – two course supper and general knowledge quiz - Guildhall

Friday 22nd February 2013 – Mayor's Annual Charity Ball – pre dinner reception – four course meal with wine and dancing to “Green Onions”, the UK Blues Brothers Tribute Band.

For further information and tickets for the Quiz and Ball, contact the Mayor's secretary, Sue Aldington, 01235 468 341, sue.aldington@abingdon.gov.uk or call in to the Town Council, Old Abbey House, Abbey Close.

Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year

