



The Breeze

Upper Rissington's Newsletter

Winter 2017

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Welcome to another edition of the Breeze, there aren't any icicles yet as I'm writing this but everything could have changed by the time it lands on your doorstep!

Once again it's great to be able to share lots of news about what's going on in the community, for all ages and interests. No sports news this time, but don't forget that the sports equipment at the Village Hall, including badminton and table tennis, is available for members of the community to use—you don't have to wait for the Sports Committee to organise something. Contact details for the Committee are given on the back page so do get in touch with them.

David is taking a well-earned break from his Road Name articles this time, but will return in the future to fill us in on more of the newer roads. We hope to include an updated map at some stage, so do contact us if you know a good source.

As always, if you'd like to contribute an article or have some news you'd like to share, do get in touch with us at URNEWS@btinternet.com, we'd love to hear from you!

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of 'The Breeze' editorial team, to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and positive New Year.

Sue Handy

Village News

SOCIAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

In September (it seems a long time ago now) we held our Barn Dance, which was certainly an energetic night! Our wonderful catering crew prepared such a feast with plenty left over at the end of the night and no empty tummies. Financially we could have done with selling perhaps another 20 or so tickets so we'll probably see the Barn Dance on the event list every other year in the future.



Do-si-do for all the family at this year's Barn Dance

This year's Fireworks Display went with a real bang. There was such a great turnout this year for yet another great display. The whole evening was a record-breaking one, which means we've got a fair amount of thinking to do for next year's. We're looking to double up on the number of barbecues to reduce the queues and change the layout so that it's easier to get to the bar. We'll also have to look at our stock levels as the mulled wine was in such demand. All of these problems are caused by the success of the event and the number of people who now come to our display. That's the best sort of problem to have and next year should be even better.



A big success, this year's bonfire

The Firework Display is one of the costlier events to put on and we're quite happy if we can get close to recouping most of the costs on the night. But we have to thank you for your generosity in contributing over £700 in the collecting buckets, as well as thanking the teams on food and drinks and, particularly, the wonderful children who manned their own stall and contributed over

£500 from the sales of sweets, glow sticks, cakes and biscuits. The result is that the event actually made a profit, which is tremendous news and so necessary if we're to continue to invest in more barbecues, gazebos, better PA and all of the things which add to the enjoyment of our events. So many are involved in making this event such a success, from the committee members who plan and organise the event to the hardworking 'on-the-day' helpers who run around building bonfires, erecting gazebos, cooking, preparing and, at the end of the event, clearing and cleaning up. We owe them all a big 'thank you'; and remember, there's always room for you if you want to get involved.

The next event is the Panto, Dick Whittington, on 7th January (oh yes it is). Look out for it: we have the same touring group as we've had for the last few years and they're always a popular group. This year we've asked them to ensure they bring their stage lighting as the hall lights were a bit bright for last year's (which was the first time the Panto had been held at the new Village Hall). Tickets will go on sale in the next few weeks so be sure to book early.



This guy wanted somewhere warm to sit...

We'll be at the Village Hall Open Day on 9th December. Come along and talk to us about future events, share our ideas, and we'd like you to share yours. Find out how to get more involved in future events, whether planning and organising or helping on the day. We're always appreciative of the support we receive, from the community and particularly from our helpers.

Finally, one more date for the diary. I know we're not even at Christmas yet but *The Breeze* is quarterly so it's worth informing everyone that this year we will again be planning an Easter Egg Hunt, Easter Saturday in the Hall and the surrounding fields. More details will be posted closer to the date but keep it in your diary, it's a fun time for the children.

An Unfortunate Article ...

Upper Rissington is blessed with lots of dogs and dog-walkers, most of whom are friendly and responsible and add greatly to community life. However, over the past few months, the subject of 'dog mess' that has not been cleaned up has repeatedly been mentioned on social media pages and in conversations exchanged between various villagers. It has been raised again with the Parish Council with the hope that they will step in on behalf of the community as a whole.

Dog fouling should be a problem of the past. Long-gone should be the days of white, dried, powdery dog poo that characterised the 1970s and 80s. But, alas, it seems that some people simply cannot be bothered to clean up after their pets.

The law is very clear on what you must do, either as a dog-owner or if you find yourself in charge of someone else's dog. **You are legally required to clean the mess up.** This may involve bag-it and bin-it, which can be in any bin in the village. It should not be left on common parkland or play spaces, pavements or footpaths, for someone else to subsequently step in.

This is a particularly unpleasant anti-social behaviour and we would encourage all dog-owners and -walkers to take personal responsibility and clean up after their dog.

It is important to note that professional dog-walkers who do not clean up after any dog under their control will be responsible for paying any fine, and not the dog-owner. If you employ a professional dog-walker, please make sure they understand their responsibility to do so.

As a community, what we would ask is:

- we want a pleasant community that people can walk around in, and stepping in dog poo is never the top of anyone's list
- if you let your children walk your dog, please ensure they are confident and happy to clean up after it
- if you are walking your dog in the evening, especially at this time of year, take a torch and consider a small light attached to your dog's collar so you can see where they poo and clean up after them if necessary
- consider putting your bags in a dispenser attached to your dog's lead so you never leave the house without them
- remind professional dog-walkers of their responsibility to clean up. The District and County Councils can restrict the number of dogs a person is allowed to be in control of and ban individuals from certain areas if they repeatedly offend.



Please Pick Up
After Your Pet

'Failure to clean up after your dog could result in your being fined up to £1,000!'

VILLAGE HALL NEWS



We have our chairs for the Community Room, we have our new tables for the Community Room. We have our new cleaning machine which is keeping the floors clean and hygienic. The usage of the hall is improving and this is making the Hall a vibrant facility which is, in turn, generating funds to help us invest in improving the facilities. In the next few months we're setting up the priorities for our spending. Very shortly we intend to put opaque window covering in the sports hall to improve privacy for hirers. We're looking into signage, both at the Hall and pointing to the Hall

It's not all plain sailing, we've had a few maintenance issues, but with the goodwill and help of good neighbours using their specialist skills we're getting by really well. Nick and Radka Allport saved the day when we had one unfortunate incident that could have meant closing the Hall. They provided help to us within hours of our emergency. We also had tremendous service from Albion the next day who checked out our whole drainage system within an hour of them being informed of our problems. Our heating system decided to leave us in the cold with a set of intermittent faults. Ashley North gave up his evenings after a hard day's work to nurse the system back to full health. The gardens are ever improving through Jackie's tender care; they took a hammering at the fireworks display but they will come back as everything is being prudently planned to withstand the heavy wear we want to see from a well-used Hall. We are so grateful to the many volunteers who are helping to keep the Hall a part of the community and helping us to control costs in the process: thank you.

We still have vacancies for the Management Committee. We need people who represent as much of the community as possible. We need diversity of opinion to add to the wealth of skill and knowledge that will be provided by our new appointees (more on them in the next edition). We're looking for people who are community-minded, who can work as part of a team. We really need people who can add different opinions to the pot, but can respect and work with the opinions of others. Come to our open day on 9th December and chat with us to see if you would enjoy working with us. It is sometimes stimulating, sometimes fun, and a way to exercise your skills in an environment that benefits your community.

On the subject of the Open Day: circumstances meant that we've had to cancel two intended dates. We have a solid date now, Saturday 9th December, 11am until 1pm. We've organised refreshments including mulled wine and mulled fruit juice (Christmas spirit minus the alcoholic spirit). Enjoy a mince pie and a chat with many of the groups, organisations, clubs and societies who use the Hall. Talk to the Social Committee about upcoming events and how you might get involved; meet the Little Hurricanes; and check out the dance, self-defence, relaxation and yoga classes. The Rotary Club will be there to discuss local membership and activities. Meet and chat with the Trustees and Management Team about what we intend to do with your Hall. Give us your view on the priorities for developing the facilities and equipment in the Hall. There'll be a bit of a Christmas theme to the day with Christmas carols in the background and there may even be a tree (not guaranteed yet). If you're new to the area come and meet your new neighbours and see what you can get involved in. If you've been here a while, come and make sure we've got your views on what you want from your Village Hall. It's intended to be a fun, sociable and informative event which we hope to run annually.

MP CHAIRS WELL-ATTENDED PUBLIC MEETING IN UPPER RISSINGTON



Approximately 60 people attended a public meeting at Upper Rissington chaired by Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, Member of Parliament for The Cotswolds, with a panel consisting of County Cllr Nigel Moor representing Gloucestershire County Council and District Cllr Mark MacKenzie-Charrington representing Cotswold District Council.

The MP called the meeting because despite previous public meetings, the problems with Bovis Homes and Linden Homes – the two developers – failing to complete the development at Upper Rissington is causing huge frustration amongst the residents living at Victory Fields where the development is taking place. Mr Clifton-Brown had repeatedly urged Bovis and Linden Homes to send representatives to the meeting; however, both declined.

The Cotswolds' MP was able to announce at the meeting that Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council had agreed in principle to resource officers from both councils to form a liaison board to discuss with the developers how they are going to resolve the significant number of issues in order to complete the development in a relatively tight time-schedule.

These issues include resolving to the satisfaction of residents that there is no residual risk from asbestos that has previously been dumped on the site. Road safety, particularly around the school which could be achieved by traffic calming, all of which needs to be finalised before the roads are adopted. Adequacy and correct positioning of street lights. Resolving who is to take over sub-drainage systems (SUDS) and open spaces. Pedestrian crossings and footpaths, including the crossing over Longmore Walk. Handicapped access to the shops, lighting of roundabouts, installation of water butts, water pressure for the entire village and concerns over sewerage. In addition to all of this, there will be two large retrospective planning applications relating to the public open spaces and design of the entire estate.

Commenting after the meeting, the MP said: 'I have never seen a substantial residential development such as this with so many outstanding issues. I blame the developers for very poor site supervision, including their use of sub-contractors. If Bovis and Linden Homes wish to regain their reputation in the Cotswolds, they need to rapidly get on top of the situation.'

Gloucestershire County Councillor Nigel Moor said after the meeting: 'I would like to thank our MP for both chairing the meeting and his support for setting up the liaison committee. I hope that this will persuade the developers that there is both a need for much more co-ordination to complete the building of Victory Fields and that they will attend the meetings of the liaison committee.'

District Councillor Mark MacKenzie-Charrington said following the public meeting: 'I am delighted the way the meeting has gone this evening. With Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP in the chair we were able to cover 50 questions raised by residents of Upper Rissington village and 'Victory Fields' the new housing scheme. It would appear that there is tacit support for the principle of establishing a liaison committee to work with the CDC officers and the joint developers to bring the development to a conclusion delivering the new infrastructure that is for the benefit of all.'



LITTLE HURRICANES



It has been really lovely to see our group continue to thrive with new faces arriving every week. We are a community effort and try to make our sessions a comfortable and inviting place for our villagers, neighbours and friends to meet and form new acquaintances. It can be very isolating sometimes for parents, especially if you have recently moved into the area, so we appreciate the importance of having a place to come and get to know people who are also experiencing the joys and sometimes struggles of parenting young children. We offer tea, coffee and biscuits for the adults, maybe cake and hot chocolate now the season's changing, and healthy snacks for the children.



The NHS Health Visitor clinic every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month has remained a popular and helpful service. Nicky Gee and her colleagues are very supportive of this clinic and the need to bring more information on common baby and toddler topics to share with parents. Please do not feel obliged to remain on at a group session should you only need their services. It is there as a free service to the community, not just for those who attend the group.

We were grateful to receive some funding from the Parish Council, some of which we have already used to invest in play equipment, seating for the children and another large rug for our 'quiet corner'. We will look to replace some other toys that require attention too.



Monkey Music has proved to be really popular and well received. Sian comes in after snack every 2nd Thursday and delights the children across all ages and the adults with her songs, instruments and textiles. We are planning to continue to book her into next year, further supported by some of the grant funding we received.



November has also seen us enjoy a mobile ceramics studio set up by The Pottery Place, Witney, and a photographic studio by Alastair Currill, just in time for some Christmas gifts and portraits.

On the subject of Christmas, again using some of the grant funding, we are intending a party atmosphere with Monkey Music, party food and gifts for the children on the 14th December and some extra 'holiday-time' hired Inflatable fun for our babies and under 5's on the 21st December to round off the year.



Thank you to everyone who supports our group and if you've never been to Little Hurricanes, we'd absolutely love to see you at one of our sessions. If you are anxious about popping in please drop us a note on Facebook or email us at littlehurricanes@hotmail.com to let us know you're coming and we will make sure we look out for you.

The Church in Upper Rissington:

valuing everyone



10th Anniversary

Sunday 10th September marked 10 years since the first Sunday Café was held in the old Village Hall. And so we held a celebration in the Rissington School, where we now meet, welcoming friends old and new to catch up with what we have been doing. Some of the people we welcomed back had been at that very first Café.

A service of thanksgiving was led by Andrew Maclean and included music by DeNovo, a local worship band. It was followed by a splendid buffet lunch complete with a wonderful birthday cake made by Rose. During the afternoon, some of the key people who have been involved with CUR:ve were interviewed and shared some of their memories.



It was also an opportunity to officially thank Kami & Liz Kalsi for all they have done in the community and for CUR:ve. Kami ended by giving us the exciting news that they are expecting their third child.

Future worker

CUR:ve has been taking some time to consider what the role of a future worker should include and hopes to be able to proceed with recruitment in the New Year.

Christmas

See below for details of our Christmas activities. We won't be holding a service on Sunday 24th December but there are lots of services to choose from at other local churches, to which everyone is welcome. These include:

- St Lawrence, Bourton-on-the-Water: Crib Service—4pm & Midnight Communion—11:15pm
- St John the Baptist, Great Rissington: Crib Service—4pm
- St Laurence, Wyck Rissington: Midnight Communion—11:15pm
- Bourton Baptist Church: Morning worship—10.30am & Carols by candlelight—6pm
- St Mary's, Church Westcote: Carol service—3.30pm

What's on?

Sunday Cafe

drop in 10.30-12 first
Sunday every month
@ The Rissington School

Sunday Cafe Plus

10.30-12 all other Sundays
@ The Rissington School
(worship from 10.45am)

Christmas celebrations at CUR:ve

Everyone is invited to join us for:

Sunday 17th December 4pm at the Village Hall
Carols & Crib service, followed by mincepies and mulled wine. Please encourage the children to come dressed up as their favourite Nativity character.

Christmas Day 10.30am at the Rissington School
Short service suitable for the whole family.

Cats in the Community

Cats make wonderful pets. They are playful, clean and independent. They have adapted in the last few thousand years to live companionably with humans and having such a free spirit choose to stay with you that is part of the charm.

Body Language

Cats take some getting used to when you first get to know one. A happy cat will offer you a slow blink, a gentle flick of the end of the tail or an arched back with an arched tail as you stroke them, as well as purring. A cat is getting annoyed if the whole tail is flicked, it uses a grumbling growl or dashes off. Watching for these signs can help you to know when your cat wants attention or would rather snooze in peace.

New Cats

With our growing village community, lots of new cats are moving in with their owners. The Blue Cross recommends that cats are kept inside their new home for two to four weeks to settle in. When they are first let out, it helps if it's before they've eaten so they come back for their food. The Cats Protection League (CPL) recommends that all cats should be microchipped, vaccinated and neutered. Register with a local vet (our nearest is Stow) and make sure the microchip organisation has your updated details.

The Law

The law recognises cats as property. If somebody steals a cat from its registered owner, this is considered theft and is reportable to the police. The difficulty is that cats often sneak into other homes to seek food and can be enticed away from perfectly loving homes. Feeding other people's cats is well meaning, but cat loyalty is a tricky balancing act, so please don't make it harder for owners. If you find a cat you think is a stray, please take any reasonable steps you can to find the owner and let them know where their cat is. Cats who are able to wear safety collars (and not all can) and those who are microchipped and can be scanned by the vet are obviously much easier to identify.

Legally, cats are protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This says cats should be able to exhibit normal behaviour and highlights the mental distress of denying a cat access to its natural behaviour patterns. For most cats this means having the right to roam and explore their environment. Some cats need to live indoors (for example if they are blind, deaf or very nervous), but the majority would be very unhappy and confining them could be cruel. The CPL recommends keeping cats in at night (not that this is popular with cats!) as their eyes don't adjust as quickly as ours to light changes, making headlights and dark roads dangerous. However, many are allowed free rein and cat owners therefore rely on cars being driven carefully, and others not stealing or harming their cat. Usually this works well, but there are many sad stories.

Lost Cats

Having been on a steep learning curve about what to do when your pet goes missing, the advice is to check anywhere it could be hiding in your own home or garden, then advertise with posters, flyers and using social media (your insurance company may help by offering a reward or anonymous phone line); also let neighbours, vets, microchip and national lost-pet databases know. Another helpful tip I've had is to keep calling them in case they suddenly remember to come home.

Our Cat

Our beautiful black cat Leo has been missing since 22nd October. This has left us feeling distraught and powerless. Leo was rehomed via the Blue Cross four years ago after three previous homes and it has taken a lot of love and time for him to become a relaxed, affectionate fellow. He has changed from a semi-bald cat who bit and scratched, to curling up on our laps in the evening and sleeping in the nook of my daughter's arm. We are doing everything we can to find Leo. He could have been trapped, injured or killed, or be in someone's house. There are so many cats that need a loving home, I don't think they need to be shared! Please keep an eye out for our Leo. He is hugely missed.



(Please contact the Breeze if you have any information and we will pass it on)

Upper Rissington Scout Group



We have had a great start to the Autumn term with the children working on their Navigator badge. Thanks to the grants we have been awarded we have been able to buy Ordnance Survey maps of the local area and compasses to help add another layer to their learning. We have enjoyed learning about map symbols, contours and hopefully by the end of the year they will be fully competent map-readers, after all, there is no guarantee you will always find yourself on SatNav!



In October we awarded our Senior Scout, Charlene, with a Scout Orderly badge in recognition of all her hard work with both the Junior Scouts and the Beavers over the last 12 months. Leading up to Remembrance Sunday we put our curriculum on hold for a week and had the pleasure of being joined by Andrew Millin who brought along a collection of WW2 memorabilia including a Rover uniform from the time. The kids really got so much out of the session, getting to try on some of the uniform made the world many of their Great Grandparents lived in a lot more tangible.



Every week we are learning new games to play with the equipment we bought over the summer, the parachute being a particular success.

We are always looking for adults who are willing to get involved with the running of the group so please get in touch with us via email, our Facebook group or contact Michael direct if you would like to join us. The more adults we have involved the more we will be able to do with the children. Our group is currently full but we do have a waiting list. We meet every Monday at the Village Hall 6.00pm - 7.30pm. Junior Scouts welcomes both Boys and Girls aged 7-11. We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received this year from our community and would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2018.

Rissington Stargazers' Astronomy Diary

Dec 2017 – Feb 2018

Welcome to the Rissington Stargazers' Breeze page. First of all, here is a selection of upcoming astronomical delights for your diary:

December 3 - Full Moon, Supermoon. The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth to the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This phase occurs at 15:47 UCT (GMT). This is also the only supermoon for 2017. The Moon will be at its closest approach to the Earth and may look slightly larger and brighter than usual.

December 7th-17th (peak 13th & 14th) - Geminids Meteor Shower. The Geminids is arguably the king of the meteor showers. It is considered by many to be the best shower in the heavens, producing up to 120 meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by debris left behind by an asteroid known as 3200 Phaethon, which was discovered in 1982. The shower runs annually from December 7th-17th. It peaks this year on the night of the 13th and morning of the 14th. The waning crescent Moon will be no match for the Geminids this year. The skies should still be dark enough for an excellent show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Gemini, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

December 21st - December Solstice. The December solstice occurs at 16:28 UTC. The South Pole of the Earth will be tilted toward the Sun, which will have reached its southernmost position in the sky and will be directly over the Tropic of Capricorn at 23.44 degrees south latitude. This is the first day of winter (winter solstice) in the Northern Hemisphere.



Ever wondered where the saying 'Once in a Blue Moon' comes from? Every so often there are two full Moons within the same calendar month. One such occasion is January 2018 when there will be full Moons on the 2nd and the 31st. In such months, the second full Moon is known as a Blue Moon - although the Moon will appear no different in colour than at any other time! Also, December's full Moon and both of January's full Moons are classed as **Supermoons** because during these periods, the timing of the full Moon coincides with the closest point in its monthly elliptical orbit of the Earth, meaning the Moon will appear about 10-15% larger and significantly brighter.

January 3rd, 4th - Quadrantids Meteor Shower. The Quadrantids is an above average shower, with up to 40 meteors per hour at its peak. It is thought to be produced by dust grains left behind by an extinct comet known as 2003 EH1, which was discovered in 2003. The shower runs annually from January 1st - 5th. It peaks this year on the night of the 3rd and morning of the 4th. Unfortunately, the nearly full Moon will block out all but the brightest meteors this year. If you are patient, you should still be able to catch some of the brightest ones. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Bootes, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

Don't forget to join our Facebook group **Rissington Stargazers** for the latest news and local events. (Info courtesy of stellarium.org and seasky.org)

The sound of chatting and laughter is what greets people who come along to Pioneers on alternate Wednesdays in the Community Room of the Village Hall. About 15-18 people come along each time and enjoy coffee, cake and company.

PIONEERS

On *Wednesday 6th December*, Sheryl Murray from the Cotswold Friends joins us to tell us about the services the Cotswold Friends provide.

Then on *Wednesday 20th December*, as a one-off, we meet at the Wyck Rissington Village Hall for pre-Christmas nibbles and carol singing.

The Pioneers are always looking for ideas of activities people may want to try. So a small group enjoyed a Friday morning circular 3-mile walk from Great Rissington followed by a stop-off at the Lamb. A second walk saw the group set off from Bourton and do a circular 4-mile tour taking in the church at Wyck Rissington. We hope to continue these walks once a month. Everyone is welcome to join us. If you would like to be kept informed of the dates and locations of our next walks, please email urpioneers@gmail.com.

Pioneers meets on alternate Wednesdays (from December 6th) in the Community Room at the Village Hall, and you can drop in any time between 10.30 and 12.30. There is a small charge of £2 to cover the cost of hiring the hall. Do have a look at our facebook page for more information or contact us via email (on urpioneers@gmail.com) or by phone (01451 824328).



GREAT RISSINGTON ARCHERS

Great Rissington Archers is a thriving archery club (founded in 2006) at the Great Rissington Club. You may have seen us at the Upper Rissington summer fete last year or at the Health and Wellbeing event at the North Cotswold Hospital, where we helped raise money for charity. We hope to be there again next year, and if we are would like to invite you all to come along and have a go.

If you feel that archery may be of interest for you, we run several beginners' courses throughout the year. Our next course starts on the 2nd May 2018 and a second course will be run from 20th June. (There are some age and height limitations for youngsters so please check when booking.) Participants undertake 12 hours of structured tuition during which they learn how to shoot safely and with the correct technique. At the end of the course they receive a certificate showing they have attended an Archery GB approved beginners' course and are invited to join the club.



We are always ready to welcome new people in a friendly and relaxed manner. If you are interested in trying archery or have a valid Archery GB membership, please check out our website at www.grarchers.org.uk or pop down to the club for a chat.

Gardening On a Hill

It has been a pretty miserable gardening year for me. I have not worked much outside since early April and it has been difficult at times. I have missed working in the fresh air and feel I have not achieved the best from my garden space this year. My dear husband has tried his best to help out where he can but he is no gardener and for me it's just not the same as doing it myself. I actually like the hard work you put into gardening and you certainly do see the benefits it brings when it is all done and looking great. My frustration started to show itself way back in May while I was trying to get the vegetable garden planted up. I did think, after my accident in April, I would just leave the garden this year but when gardening and growing your own food gets under your skin, you just can't let it go. Bless him, my husband has endured the growing season with a lot of patience I am sure, and continues to do so, but for how much longer remains to be seen. I just hope I am back on my feet very soon, as I am sure he does too.

Preparing the ground

As the building work comes to an end on the old industrial estate and many of the houses are now occupied I thought it might be a good idea to talk about soil improvements. Those of you who are new to the village may have noticed that the soil up here is not the best for planting in. In fact, if what I have heard is true, then the residents in the new-builds have even worse soil added on top of the bad stuff. I have had some experience of working with the soil at the school and it's not great: it's lifeless and heavy and difficult to dig. So I am going to repeat an article I wrote a few years back for the benefit of any keen gardeners who have moved into a lovely house up on the hill, not realising what is under their feet.

I have always believed that if any job is worth doing then it's worth doing right. If your soil is healthy then your plants will be too. So if you want a lovely garden then the hard work has to be put in first by improving your soil. Winter is a good time to start as plants are dormant and not wasting energy growing so you can lift them and put them out of the way while you sort out the soil in your borders.

For many years I have been writing about the benefits of composting garden waste and adding it to the soil in your garden. Being a Master Composter and working with Garden Organic and our District Council to promote recycling garden and food waste, of course I would want you to use your own Compost to improve your garden soil. However, the process can take some time and organisation, as well as space for composting in your garden. It is the cheapest and best way of improving your garden soil, but you do need to do a bit of planning first. If you are interested in starting to compost your own garden and kitchen waste and need some advice I will leave some leaflets in the Village Hall and at the school to help you get started.

Meanwhile you can improve the soil in your garden and in turn feed the plants by adding some well-rotted manure. Horse manure will help make the soil easier to work over time and improve drainage; however, it is very alkaline and some plants will not like it. Cow muck is better but difficult to get hold of. You can buy bags of Manure locally that is steam-treated, so better to handle. This can be used as a mulch in the spring to keep weeds down or spread over the soil now and the worms will do the job of taking it down into the soil for you.



Mulching between plants and shrubs before winter can help to protect the soil as well as keeping in vital nutrients and moisture which are needed for the soil to remain fertile and keep your garden looking good throughout the year. Leaf mould is excellent for this job, and also adds greatly to the structure of soil by making clay soils easier to work. Collect the leaves and stack them in an unused area of the garden to rot down, then they can be spread over the border in between plants.

Pruning

Blackcurrant bushes need constant renewal to ensure heavy crops. Older branches will bear fruit, but quantity and quality decline with age. For this reason, new bushes are planted deeply so they produce vigorous young branches annually from below ground. These are then used to replace older ones cut out after harvest. Each year, remove about one third of the oldest stems - the bark is very dark to the point of being black - and any that are weak or very low. Always cut back to ground level or to a strong new shoot. You can combine pruning with picking the fruit, or wait until winter.



Grapevines are exuberant climbers, so if you plant one for its fruit you will need to keep it under control. Training methods are based around one or more permanent stems from which fruiting side shoots arise annually. In mid-winter, prune some side shoots back to one bud and others to two. Cut back developing main stems by half their new growth and established ones to a single, new bud. In summer, shorten non-flowering laterals to four or five leaves and side shoots growing from these to one leaf. Prune laterals carrying flowers to two leaves beyond the first truss and remove any extra trusses.

A **gooseberry bush** becomes tangled and unhealthy without pruning. Good management means keeping the centre open to air and sunlight, leaving a few, regularly-spaced, main branches. In winter, prune out dead or diseased stems, and any crossing in the centre. Cut back to a young shoot. Thin overcrowded areas and prune drooping stems to an upright side shoot. Shorten new growth by half to maintain an acceptable size.

Clematis that belong to pruning group 3 flower from July onwards, on growth produced during the current year. There are usually several flowers to each stem. This group includes the *C. viticella* and '*Jackmanii*' varieties. All require hard pruning annually to keep them under control and flowering well. In the first year after planting, during early to mid-spring, cut back all stems to 30cm above ground level. This will encourage more shoots to be produced from the base for the next year. You may miss some flowering in the first two years, but a much stronger plant will result. In the second year, and in subsequent years, cut back all stems to just above the base of the previous year's growth, about 75cm above soil level. Prune to the lowest pair of healthy buds.

Other jobs

The arrival of frosts will come all too quickly now. If you haven't done it already, lift any remaining tender plants and bring them in under cover or protect them with cloches.

With the decrease of green spaces in the village the wildlife and birds in particular have little habitat to forage for food. You can help the birds by feeding and watering them. If you can, add nesting boxes to the north sides of trees (In your own garden of course) before nesting season starts in earnest in the spring. But be careful on those ladders!

Happy Gardening.

Polly

7pm Tuesday 30th January

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NHS Clinic: every 1st and 3rd Thurs



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Rissingtons Local History Society

In **September** a group of members visited **Woodchester Mansion** near Stroud, a fascinating building with an interesting history. We all wanted to return and explore the NT gardens surrounding the Mansion.

In **October** our first meeting in your new Community room at Upper Rissington was well attended, with an excellent talk by Richard Wheeler – the National Trust Garden Historian – who explained how Queen Anne rewarded her Generals with property and they all modelled their gardens on Versailles!

The **November** talk will, I am sure, be a fascinating look at Dad's Underground Army by Bill King.

Forthcoming events: (There is no event in **December**.)

Friday 19th January 2018 2.30pm. Wrecks to Relics – the story of Mulberry Harbour.

Paul Barnett will give an illustrated talk on the D Day flotilla of concrete ships that played a vital role in the success of the Normandy landings.

Venue Great Rissington Club

Friday 16th February 2018 2.30pm. Turnpikes & Transport in Georgian Gloucestershire

an illustrated talk by Nicholas Herbert highlighting the improvements made to our roads during the 18th & 19th Centuries.

Venue Great Rissington Club

Visitors Welcome – £3.50 to include refreshments. For further information, please contact Sue Brown on 01451 820233/spsb@hotmail.co.uk or Tony Ellam on 01451 833854/anthonyellam@btinternet.com.

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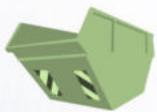
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Useful Contacts In Upper Rissington

This is a list of people and organisations in Upper Rissington who provide goods or services in the village. Inclusion in this list is not a recommendation. If you would like your business included the cost will be £5 towards the printing costs of 'The Breeze'. Contact URNEWS@btinternet.com or call 07592 533596 for more details.

Other useful sources of information about the village include the facebook page and the independent website www.upperrissington.org. Please note that any opinions expressed on these sites are personal to the contributors and are not promoted by 'The Breeze'.

Name	Service	Web/email	Phone
Police	Non-Emergency Number		101
Albion Water	Water Service Emergency Customer Services		0800 917 5819 03300 242020
Parish Council	Clerk	clerk@upperrissington-pc.gov.uk	01451 810839
Little Hurricanes	Baby and Toddler Group	littlehurricanes@hotmail.com	
Social Committee	Community Events	URSC@btinternet.com	07592 533596
Village Hall		urv@btinternet.com	01451 821820
The Breeze	Newsletter	URNEWS@btinternet.com	07592 533596
Rissington Singers	Village Choir	rissington.singers@btinternet.com	
CUR:ve	Church in UR	sendtocurve@gmail.com	
UR Sports	Saturday football	blackgary4@aol.com	
John Surch	Great Rissington Cricket Club - Seniors	surch@gotadsl.co.uk	01451 820567 07808 307364
Pete Garrett	Great Rissington Cricket Club - Juniors	Petegarratt117@gmail.com	07788 896496

The next issue of 'The Breeze' is due to be published at the beginning of March 2018. Please contact us at URNEWS@btinternet.com or call 07592 533596 if you would like to contribute articles or news items. The deadline for contributions is **Friday 16th February 2018**.

For advertising enquiries you can also email Keelin McLeman
(keelinbracken@gmail.com)



*Winter snow in Upper Rissington
(photo courtesy David Harrison)*