



Village Shop News Update

Shop Telephone – 01295 760066

CHRISTMAS HOURS – THE SHOP WILL CLOSE ON 24TH DECEMBER AT 1PM & RE-OPENS ON 27TH DECEMBER. NOTICES WILL BE POSTED IN THE SHOP WINDOW FOR THE NEW YEAR.

So, the Festive Season is almost with us & there's much to report leading up to what will be a busy period for us all & I hope that your plans include completing that all important Christmas Order Form that was distributed with the Newsletter last month. Spare copies are available from the shop so please get yours into the Shop just as soon as you can! We can offer Christmas trees (of the non needle dropping variety), wreaths & bouquets again this year so please do include these in your thoughts / plans; every little helps us all (sounds just a little familiar) improve our Shop.

This is also the month that sees David disappearing off into the wild blue yonder of retirement! Many of you will have joined him for his farewell bash at The Star on the 6th December to wish him well. I'd like to add my personal thanks to a modest man (well that's how he describes himself!) for helping steer the Shop towards what could be the biggest in turnover terms since we started. David you WILL be missed

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The Management Committee would also like to update you on how the appointment of Sharron, David's replacement, is progressing. Darryl-Louise has been fantastic in both her determination to make things happen & keeping us all informed as a Committee & has put a piece together which outlines what will be happening & when.

The Management Committee apologise for the length of time it has taken to confirm the official appointment of Sharon Halleron-Kerr as our new Shop Manager and Sub Postmistress. Unfortunately the Post Office has tightened up on their working arrangements with Community Shops and they weren't able to interview and confirm her appointment until last Friday (22 November 2013). Robin and Sharon spent a great deal of time together in the Summer to put together a robust business plan for the development of the Post Office services in Sulgrave. You'll be pleased to know that she did a great job in presenting it as well as answering some pretty tough questions about the Post Office operations and relevant legislation. According to Peter Pollak who accompanied her to the interview she was an absolute star !

Sharon is currently a Senior Science Technician at a Senior School in Henley in Arden but was formerly the landlady of The Butchers Arms in Bishops Itchington and a Mortgage Advisor/Cashier for the Coventry Building Society. She lives fairly locally in Fenny Compton and now that her boys are off to College and University wants to move back into a managerial role within a community-based business. She is very excited about joining us here in Sulgrave and has lots of ideas about how we can consolidate and build upon the Shop's success going forward.

Given the above delays it has not been possible to synchronise David's retirement and Sharon's start date and so Susie Blayney has very kindly agreed to take charge of the shop during the interim. David will leave as planned on 07 December and Sharon will join us in the first week of January 2014. We are currently working with the Post Office to secure temporary cover for the Post Office during December and early January whilst Sharon undertakes six days classroom-based training. Watch out for notices in the Shop window / door for more information as things develop.

We hope that as many villagers as possible will join us for David's farewell drinks in The Star on 06 December to wish him a long and happy retirement ...

We also look forward to introducing you all to Sharon when she joins the Shop in January ... '

So, how has the Shop performed in the last few weeks? Excellent is the answer; sales up to close of business on 10th November are up 5.3% on the same period in 2012. With the takings over the Christmas / New Year period, we may just see a record performance in terms of takings which would be a phenomenal achievement when all around us in the retail world still seem to be struggling. Thank you everybody that has helped make 2013 a memorable year for our Shop. The main areas where we've seen the growth has come from alcohol (+63% hic), frozen foods (+26%), ice cream (+18%) & crisps / snacks (+13%). Interestingly vegetables & fresh produce are actually down in takings but this may well pick up when you get your Christmas Order Forms (yes I know that I'm a nag!) into us. Digby's area has just been an outstanding success for us this year & a huge vote of thanks must go to him. His 'Festive Wine Corner' makes excellent reading & follows this missive.

There are lots of Festive treats that are in the Shop now so spend a moment when you're next in having a look. Winter vegetables are there in abundance; we now sell loose potatoes as well, no more pre-packed spuds for us. The clementines are in stock & are absolutely delicious.

This is now beginning to get a little on the lengthy side so I'll cut short here & finish by wishing you all a very happy Christmas & a prosperous new year. See you in the Shop & over to you Digby ...

'Mac' Macdonald

01295 760470

WINE CORNER

The perennial problem - what should we drink with our Christmas turkey? The trouble is, no one can agree and if you asked a dozen Masters of Wine for their suggestions as to what kind of wine goes best with the main Christmas meal, you would probably get twelve different answers. But there are some ground rules and it is probably best to work backwards and decide what you DON'T want.

The old adage "White wine with white meat, red wine with red meat" died a long time ago though it does retain a small element of truth. A powerful, tannic red that would be a great partner for grilled steak would almost certainly overpower a delicate chicken dish while a fragrant white which would be the perfect choice for fish is wasted on a rich casserole.

Roast turkey or goose with all the accompaniments provide a rich panoply of flavours that can be matched by a wide range of wines from flavoursome whites to medium bodied reds. The ones I would probably leave off my list are really delicate whites that make great aperitifs but can be overwhelmed by strong food flavours and heavy cabernet sauvignon or grenache based reds which might fight with the food rather than compliment it.

My personal choice would be a light to medium bodied red (SVS's 'Brown Brothers Tarrango' slightly chilled would slip down particularly well). If you prefer a white wine, our excellent 'La Taste' with its rich flavours would be a good choice. But don't be swayed by my views. Your taste buds are different from mine and what I think would make a perfect match you might consider grounds for separation.

One thing most people agree on is that a glass of chilled fizz before the meal titillates the taste buds and gets them tuned in for the main event. Good Champagne is, of course, the sparkling wine of choice but SVS's Maipo valley sparkling brut is remarkably good for the price and would beat a lot of far more expensive wines in a blind tasting.

I am writing this before I go on my big pre-Christmas wine shopping expedition so do keep an eye on the shop's wine shelves from early December. If I manage to pick up a few festive specials that I think would go particularly well with the Christmas bird - I shall put a notice up.

A merry Christmas to all imbibers

Digby Lewis